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Salisbury

The Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria

EDITED BY

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LORD SALISBURY

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON

THE
MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

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LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY
(LIMITED)
St Dunstan's House
FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C
1892

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THE

MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

CHAPTER I

rth and ancestry—Three Cecils—Early years—Eton and Christ Church—Foreign travel—Enters Parliament

WE have in 1890 a Prime Minister whose ancestors were milarly employed, to the great benefit of England, ten enerations ago Is not this a good? Is not this tie f lineage for him a link binding him to honour and to ublic virtue' Thus, in defence of our English mode of egulating the devolution of property, honours, and oppor unities of public service, wrote Mr Gladstone, in November f the year to which he refers The passage has assuredly nore grace of spirit than of form, but the sentiment which nimates it may well excuse its inelegance Undoubtedly t is 'a good,' both for the country and for himself, that an English Prime Minister should be the descendant of men who were 'similarly employed'—assuming that to mean nen who were eminent Ministers themselves—three hundred years ago Such hereditary attachments to 'honour and public virtue' have never been wanting, one is glad to

remember, at any period of our history; but it may be doubted whether the tie has ever been so strong, or the common eminence of the founders and the inheritor of the tradition so conspicuous as in the case of Lord Salisbury. There have of course been examples of English Ministers able to trace descent from men who have themselves stood high in the confidence of their sovereign, and who, from that post of vantage, have exerted an influence over the destinies of their country. But from the point of view of authority and opportunity, the positions of the ancestor and of the descendant have seldom been so directly comparable as here. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, has been the abler, the more powerful, the more renowned. In one ever-memorable instance, two statesmen, of whom each left an indelible mark on English and European history, stood one to the other in the relation of father and son. But that was an instance of the immediate succession to political genius, not of the atavism that 'throws back' to it. Our annals furnish no other earlier example of the highest place in the State being filled, at an interval of nearly ten generations between the second and third of the series, by three statesmen of the same family, each in turn supreme in the councils of the Crown, and each so pre-eminent in ability and authority among their contemporaries as William Cecil, first Baron Burleigh, Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, and Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, third Marquis of the latter name.

This distinguished descendant of famous forefathers was born at Hatfield on February 13, 1830, and is the second son of James Brownlow William, second Marquis of Salisbury. His father, also in his degree an inheritor of the family inclination towards an active public life, was

himself a politician of some note and importance, who twice in his career attained to the dignity of Cabinet Minister He held the office of Lord Privy Seal in Lord Derby's first Administration in 1852, and that of Lord President of the Council under the second Premiership of the same Minister in 1858 His son Robert was trained for public life in those two famous seminaries which have reared so many distinguished statesmen, his eminent predecessor in his present post among the number He left Eton for Christ Church in 1847, and after a stay of two years at Oxford took his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1849 Circumstances prevented him from offering himself as a candidate for honours, but the credit with which he acquitted himself in the pass examination was rewarded, as was then the custom, by the unsolicited (and what was often the undesired) distinction of an 'honorary fourth' His short career at the University was marked by intellectual activities of other than the strictly academic kind Like many another young Englishman destined, in later years, 'the applause of listening senates to command,' he took an active part in the debates of the Oxford Union Society, and held at one time the office of treasurer, a post filled many years later by one of his sons There is, unfortunately, no Hansard of the Oxford Union, it lacks, and has always lacked that *vates sacer* of the political orator, and the debating club speeches of Lord Robert Cecil between his seventeenth and nineteenth years must be left like the doughty deeds of the heroes before Agamemnon, to 'rest in endless night unknown' The records of the Society supply us only with particulars of the subjects which stirred him to eloquence We know that on one occasion he 'supported the drama with Professor Conington against the late Professor Shirley

CHAPTER II

State of parties—The Coalition Government—The Crimean war—University legislation—Maiden speech—Seconds 'previous question' on Mr. Roebuck's motion—From the Crimea to China—Defeat of Lord Palmerston's Government—Dissolution.

THE prospect before the Parliamentary party in whose ranks the young recruit had taken his place was discouraging enough. A brief tenure of office two years earlier had sufficed to prove that the effect of the great convulsion of 1846 was far from having exhausted itself. Numerically strengthened though they had been by the election of 1852, the Conservatives had made no progress towards removing the main cause of their moral weakness—the schism in their party on the policy of Free Trade. Protectionism still survived among them as an aspiration and a pious opinion, with no power to express itself as a principle or a policy. Free Traders accordingly, of whatever party, regarded them with more or less distrust; and their own seceding Free Traders, the Peelites, were drifting daily closer and closer to that abyss of Liberalism in which they were destined to be engulfed. The formation of the Coalition Ministry under Lord Aberdeen appeared, doubtless, to many Conservatives to be no very hopeful experiment; but it was rightly recognised by them as irrevocably determining the connection of the leading Peelites with their former party. No one

expected that Mr Gladstone, or Sir James Graham, or Mr Sidney Herbert would ever sit again in a Tory Cabinet, and they were men whom, whether as debaters or counsellors, a Tory Cabinet of the future could ill spare For the Tory party, although not wanting in politicians of marked ability, well considered among their own order, had but little in the way of approved and accredited statesmanship to offer to the country Their leader, Lord Derby, commanded the almost unbounded respect which always attaches among Englishmen to any public man who reinforces the hereditary claims of a great noble, born of an historic house, with the graces of the accomplished orator and scholar But his name was not then, and never at any time became, a name 'to conjure with' The reputation of his brilliant lieutenant, Mr Disraeli, was almost wholly confined to the House of Commons, and, though his consummate powers as a debater almost assured to him the leadership of his party in that assembly, whatever vicissitudes might be in store for him and them, he had not then succeeded, and he did not, in truth, for many years to come succeed, in winning the confidence of the nation His staff in the Lower House was made up of men like Sir John Pakington, Mr Spencer Walpole, and others—politicians of unquestioned competence in affairs, but not exactly towers of strength either in a Parliamentary debate or an electoral campaign In repute for high administrative capacity and financial talent, the Opposition were, to say the least of it, somewhat weak, yet it was for finance and administration that the public of that day were most anxious to provide The administrative capacity of the Coalition Government was largely, though as the event proved disastrously, taken on trust, but there was some ground for the belief that the national

finances might be more safely entrusted to the disciples than to the enemies of Peel. Meanwhile those other supremely important desiderata in an English Cabinet—foresight, to wit, in foreign affairs, and judgment and resolution in dealing therewith—had almost disappeared from the list of ministerial qualifications. The prophets of the Manchester Millennium were in the heyday of their confidence in themselves, and at the zenith of their influence over others. That deceptive flush which enthusiasts mistook for the dawn of a new era had not yet faded from the sky. The gigantic Hyde Park Conservatory of 1851 was still supposed to have effectually done its work as a forcing-house for the plant of international good-will. Cobden was still, with widespread acceptance, preaching the doctrine that Free Trade was destined to overrun the globe, and become an œcumenical peacemaker. In a word, the beatific vision of a kindly earth asleep, or about to sink in slumber, 'lapped in universal law,' glowed still before the eyes of multitudes of Englishmen; and if a few others perceived on the eastern horizon a little cloud shaped like the hand of the Czar Nicholas outstretched in the direction of Constantinople, it is probable that fewer still foresaw how soon the heaven would be 'black with clouds and wind,' and still less how short a time was to elapse before the great storm actually burst. In short, the English public of that day had ma[illegible] their mind—and the persuasion tended natura[illegible] then the 'Ins' and to weaken the 'Outs'—t[illegible] y was [illegible] a long [illegible] ings' of peace and [illegible] all it [illegible] the Government wa[illegible] en [illegible] o [illegible] p internal ord[illegible] fi [illegible] r the rest let [illegible]

to 'develop the material resources' of the country, as a now consecrated phrase has it, by means of Free Trade, while as for any risk of external quarrel, why, if it were too much to say that the soldier might definitively deliver up sword and spear for conversion into ploughshare and pruning hook, there was at least no reason why the Foreign Minister should not lock up his despatch boxes, and give himself an indefinite holiday

Rude, indeed, was the awakening of these dreamers, and it was now near at hand In August 1853 when Lord Robert Cecil was elected for Stamford, the unconscious nation and its nerveless Government were drifting fast towards the catastrophe which was to open the eyes of both The troops of the Czar were already in occupation of the Danubian Principalities, the Vienna Note had failed, and the war feeling was rising not only among the people but even in a certain section of the Cabinet. When Parliament met in February 1854, the crisis was imminent, for on the 27th of that month Lord Clarendon despatched the ultimatum to Russia, upon the rejection of which by the Czar Nicholas war was declared It seems a strange moment at which to illustrate the Roman poet s *Cedant arma togæ* by the introduction of a piece of academical legislation But Governments after all can hardly occupy their whole time, and employ the energies of all their various departments, in merely blundering into European wars In those days it was not, as in these considered a point of honour with Administrations to shield a session from the reproach of 'barrenness', but most Governments even then liked to have something to show in the way of legislation, and accordingly Lord John Russell, who in 1850 had procured the appointment of a Royal Commiss on to inquire into the condition of

the Universities, now came forward with a Bill for giving legislative effect to the recommendations contained in the voluminous report presented by the Commission in 1852. It was on the second reading of this measure, on April 7, 1854, that Lord Robert Cecil delivered his maiden speech in the House of Commons.

Lord John Russell's Bill was the first invitation to the Legislature and the Universities to enter on that path along which they have since travelled so far and with such increasingly doubtful results. It was the beginning of that course of academic horticulture which has uprooted a few weeds of comparatively harmless abuse to plant and rear a crop of noxious crotchets in their place. It was the initial step in the attempted realisation of that pretentious policy which sought to achieve a visionary restoration of the Oxford of the twelfth century, by laying the axe to the noble growths of the thirteenth and fourteenth, and their succeeding ages—the policy which has since gone far to destroy the colleges without re-animating the ancient idea of the University, which has multiplied prelections and diminished hearers, fattened professors and thinned audiences, endowed new branches of learning with one hand, while with the other bribing honour-hunting students to neglect them, and which has now at last carried the peculiar principles of its advocates to such a pitch of unexpected and undesired success, that they are helplessly calling out for a third Commission to undo the work of the other two.

The issues of this notable movement were not of course to be fully foreseen when the Oxford University Bill was presented for second reading to the House of Commons; but its spirit was manifested with sufficient

clearness to arouse against it all the Conservative instincts of the young member for Stamford. He fastened at once upon that fundamental iniquity which an older member of his University, Professor Mansel, was afterwards to hold up to public reprobation, in one of the wittiest and most eloquent pieces of verse which the immortal mockery of Aristophanes has ever inspired. It was the thesis of the admirable disputation between Adikos and Dikaios Logos, in the 'Phrontisterion,' which Lord Robert Cecil sought in the following passage to enforce

What seemed to him the main objection to the Bill was that it swept away at one blow all the preferences which the founders of colleges had shown for the place of their birth, all the preferences for the schools with which they had been connected, all the preferences for kindred, with the exception of one, the generosity of which could not fail to be appreciated—it proposed to admit the lineal descendants of the founders. This exception was little better than an insult, for, with two exceptions, he believed not one of the founders had left lineal descendants at all. An hon gentleman who supported the confiscation of fellowships argued that the founder had no right to tie up the property for generations, and for centuries. But then, if that were so, the analogy of private estates ought to be followed, and if the will of the founder was to be overturned, let the property return to the heir in the natural course of law

Sir John Pakington, he went on to say, had very ably argued the constitutional grounds on which this Bill ought to be rejected. But he would himself prefer, he said, to rely upon a 'narrower and mere commercial ground which, he thought would appeal more closely to popular sympathies, namely, that if they squandered in this manner the endowments of the various founders, they would have no more endowments to deal with again.' And the speaker

concluded with a warning, destined to be abundantly justified, against attaching credit to the assurance of 'finality,' with which the academic 'reformer,' like every other variety of the same species, accompanied their proposals of reform.

The compliments which, by the good-natured tradition of the House, are generally bestowed upon a maiden speech, are not, of course, to be accepted literally in all cases; but there was a note of more than common earnestness in the graceful eulogy pronounced by Mr. Gladstone, speaking evidently some hours afterwards, on the young member whose 'first efforts, rich with future promise, indicate that there still issue forth from the maternal bosom of the University men who, in the first days of their career, give earnest of what they may afterwards accomplish for their country.'

There is, however, still better evidence of the rapid Parliamentary success of the member for Stamford in the fact that little more than a year after the delivery of his maiden speech he received the honour of being 'cast' for a part of no little distinction in a Parliamentary drama of historic celebrity. To be selected on behalf of a controlling section of a great party to second a motion of the 'previous question' in the debate on a Vote of Censure means something much more, of course, than the complimentary selection of a young member to move or second the Address in reply to a Speech from the Throne; and it was to no less important a function than the former that Lord Robert Cecil was designated on July 17, 1855. This was the night on which Mr. Roebuck moved that famous resolution founded upon the report of the Sebastopol Committee, which, if it had been carried, would have affixed the seal of Parliament to the sentence of condemnation which history has pronounced

on the incapable administrators responsible for the disasters of the Crimea It invited the House to record its sorrow for the sufferings of our army during the previous winter, to approve of the resolution of its Committee that 'the conduct of the Administration was the first and chief cause of the calamities that befell that army,' and to 'visit with severe reprehension every member of that Cabinet whose counsels led to such disastrous results' No one doubts now, as few doubted then, that this stern sentence of condemnation was deserved. But the peccant Government had been expelled from office with ignominy six months before, their successors, now purged of the Peelite element of weakness which they had inherited from the defunct Cabinet, and cleared by Lord John Russell's resignation of the national distrust to which his presence in the Government had exposed them seemed inclined to prosecute the war with vigour, and on the whole, therefore, it appeared to an influential section of the Opposition that a Vote of Censure upon past Ministerial mismanagement would be inopportune It was accordingly resolved among them that Mr Roebuck's resolution should be shelved, and General Peel, a Tory of unimpeachable orthodoxy, was deputed to move, and Lord Robert Cecil to second, the 'previous question'

It is not impossible that the selection of a seconder may have been in part determined by the able speech in which some weeks before he had reviewed the Vienna negotiations in a debate on a motion of Mr Disraeli's, and had adversely criticised, on grounds which the events of fifteen years later did much to justify, the proposal to close the Black Sea in perpetuity to the Russian flag of war The Parliamentary manœuvre in which he was now called upon to take a leading part was one the prudence

and patriotism of which would hardly, I imagine, be contested by any Conservative of the present day. But it was not the line of the official Opposition. Party feeling ran high, and was complicated in many cases by personal antipathies. Mr. Roebuck's motion, nominally directed against the extinct Coalition Ministry, was in reality aimed (as its mover showed by ostentatiously excepting the late War Minister and two of his Peelite colleagues from his censure) at Lord Palmerston; and its adoption by the House would have compelled the Premier's resignation. The public mind had been deeply shocked at the state of things which the Sebastopol Committee had brought to light; and it was, no doubt, technically open to the Opposition leaders to plead the novelty of these disclosures in reply to those who taunted them with having been willing to form a Government in conjunction with Lord Palmerston six months before. Nevertheless it is impossible to justify the course pursued on that occasion by the official Opposition from any national point of view. Lord Palmerston was at that moment, as was well known—nay, as had been experimentally proved—the only possible First Minister of the Crown. Not only every other candidate but every other combination had been tried in vain. After the fall of the Aberdeen Government, Lord Derby had vainly attempted, at her Majesty's request, to construct another Coalition Cabinet; Lord Lansdowne had been sent for to advise the Queen; even Lord John Russell, the Minister who had abandoned his colleagues at the first whisper of the rising storm, had been solicited to attempt, and had attempted, the hopeless task of persuading the men whom he had deserted to rally to his side. It was only after a prolonged and anxious ministerial crisis that Lord Palmerston had at last succeeded

in forming a Government, which, moreover, within a few days after meeting Parliament, was convulsed by the resignation of three of its not least important members. To displace it at such a moment—a moment when an appeal to the constituencies was out of the question—meant leaving the country indefinitely without a Government, or at the mercy of a series of 'transient and embarrassed' ministerial phantoms and this in the very throes of a European war! Undoubtedly the leaders of the Opposition would have incurred a very grave responsibility if Mr Roebuck's motion had been carried, and they owed (though it is probable that they were very far from feeling) gratitude to General Peel, Lord Robert Cecil, and their followers for having saved them. The mover of the 'previous question' supported it mainly from the point of view of a military critic, who held that the House had not at present before them the materials for a safe judgment either on the policy or the conduct of the expedition to the Crimea. Lord Robert Cecil opposed Mr Roebuck's resolution as 'historical and retrospective,' and pointed out the dangers of establishing a precedent for attacking the policy of ex Ministers. The resolution was supported in the debate by Mr Disraeli, Sir John Pakington, and other official or influential members of the Opposition, and the minority of 182 which voted for it contained a considerable majority of the Conservative party.

Early in the year 1856, the conclusion of peace with Russia left Parliament at liberty to devote itself to matters of domestic interest, and the member for Stamford, who was evidently animated in full measure with those feelings of dislike and regret with which the Conservative party in general regarded the Crimean war, returned, no doubt with

a sense of relief, to the undistracted consideration of questions connected with elementary education and the improvement of the reformatory system. His interest in these subjects, especially in the former, had always been lively, and the part—active and watchful, without degenerating into fussiness—which he took in the discussion of them during the session of 1856, gave further proof to the House of Commons that he possessed constructive as well as critical ability.

His opportunities, however, of promoting or opposing legislation in the then existent Parliament were to be speedily cut short. In the Spring of 1857 the Chinese Government were ill-advised enough to present Lord Palmerston with one of those chances for a display of what would now be called 'Jingoism,' but was then more flatteringly described as a 'spirited foreign policy,' which that veteran swaggerer seldom missed. In the previous autumn the Chinese had seized the lorcha 'Arrow,' under circumstances raising a contention not necessary here to be revived; and in a trice we found ourselves engaged in a Chinese war. The Conservative party united with the Peelites and Radicals in denouncing Lord Palmerston's proceedings; Lord Robert Cecil spoke and voted with his party. A motion of censure was carried against Ministers by 263 votes to 247; whereupon they appealed to the country, and were sent back again to power with a largely-increased majority. The popular verdict was beyond question pronounced not only on the author of the Chinese war, but on the Minister who had 'stood in the gap' in the midst of the Crimean struggle. Vengeance descended on the peace party, and Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden lost their seats. Lord Robert Cecil was returned for Stamford unopposed.

CHAPTER III

First essay in original legislation—Marriage—Fall of Lord Palmerston—Supports the union of the Danubian Principalities—The Reform question—Views of parties—The 'Oxford Essay'—The Reform Bill of 1859—Its reception—Lord John Russell's amendment—Defeat of the Government—Dissolution and new Parliament

It was in the first session of the new Parliament which met in April 1857 that Lord Robert Cecil made his first appearance as a proposer of legislation He introduced a Bill to amend the procedure at Parliamentary elections by substituting a voting paper system for that of personal attendance at a polling station for the purpose of recording the vote To use his own words, he wished that 'the poll should be brought to the elector, instead of the elector to the poll' Such a proposal, obvious as are its superficial recommendations, is no doubt obnoxious to several more or less serious objections, it is interesting to note that by far the weightiest of them—the objection, that is to say, to the private performance of so responsible a public duty—has been stultified by the introduction of the ballot The interests of public order and of private freedom of action would unquestionably have been the gainers by the adoption of a voting paper system Riot and disorder would have been put an end to, intimidation within doors and without, by mob or master, would have become the one

impossible, the other much more difficult than in the case of open polling; the number of electors actually voting at any contested election would have been largely increased. Against each of these recommendations, however, it was possible in 1858 to set its countervailing drawback. Popular turbulence, it might have been said, should never be allowed such a triumph over the peaceful citizen as to drive him to perform in private an act which ought certainly to be performed, if possible, in the presence of his fellows. As to intimidation, the capacity of resisting it is a pre-supposed condition of the elector's fitness to exercise the franchise, and the best test of that capacity is to require him to exercise it in public. And whether the habitual abstentionist were prevented by timidity or by indifference from recording his vote under the present system, he was disentitled, on either hypothesis, to claim the proposed alteration of the law. Except upon the assumption that the citizen not only has opinions, and the courage of them, but cares enough about them to desire their prevalence in the national policy, representative government becomes an absurdity. And if the citizen has, in fact, opinions, and the courage of them, and the desire to assert them, the least he can do in proof thereof is to take whatever trouble and incur whatever risk of disagreeable incidents may be involved in the journey to a public polling-booth to record his vote.

Replies of this kind had cogency and consistency enough in 1858; and they availed. The demand for the ballot only flourished in those days as a 'hardy annual,' introduced each session by Mr. Berkeley, and supported by a mere handful of Radicals. Hence the majority of Lord Robert Cecil's Liberal opponents on the question may, perhaps, be

charitably acquitted of insincerity, as not having foreseen that they were themselves one day destined to accept a legislative measure which would make their professed repugnance to private voting appear retrospectively hypocritical The Bill had of course to be withdrawn, but the eminent applicability of its principle to the case of the University constituencies—the electors of which may reside in many cases a couple of hundred miles from the scene of the contest—was recognised in the Reform Act of ten years later

The year 1857 is rendered further notable to the biographer of Lord Robert Cecil as being the date of his marriage with Georgina Caroline, eldest daughter of Sir Edmund Hall Alderson, Baron of the Exchequer, and a judge whose brilliant academical career had given promise of the distinction both for profound learning and for judicial acumen which he was afterwards destined to attain

The following year was politically eventful for it was in 1858 that the attack on the life of the Emperor Napoleon III impelled Lord Palmerston to that ill starred attempt to amend the English law of conspiracy which, by one of the most surprising catastrophes ever recorded in our political history, resulted in the defeat of a Minister whom the constituencies had less than a year before re established in power at the head of a triumphant majority Lord Derby received and obeyed the Queen's commands to form a new Government, and, despite the comparative weakness of the Conservative party, his conduct of the national affairs both at home and abroad during the remainder of the session of 1858 was conspicuously successful The new Administration not only effected an amicable settlement of the unfortunate misunderstanding with France, but succeeded in passing the

very important measure by which the East India Company was abolished, and the control of Indian administration vested in a Secretary of State, advised by a council.

In the course of the session two questions drew the member for Stamford into participation in debate, and the opinions respectively expressed by him upon each of them supply a good illustration of his contrasted views upon foreign and domestic policy. In his strenuous opposition to the Bill for the total abolition of Church rates, he proved the unimpeachable orthodoxy of his ecclesiastical Toryism; in his support of the claims of the two Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia to effect the union denied to them by the Treaty of 1856, he shewed himself more Liberal in his foreign policy than the Liberals themselves. The Whig diplomatist of the old school was seriously apprehensive of the danger to the 'integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire' which such a union seemed to him to portend. Lord Robert Cecil contended with much ability and earnestness that the consolidation of the two Principalities would strengthen Turkey by providing her with a new bulwark against Russian aggression.

Here, then, we have an anticipation by exactly twenty years of the arguments of the famous despatch in which Lord Beaconsfield's colleague at the Berlin Congress defended the emancipation of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia from Ottoman rule. Opinions may differ as to the soundness of the analogy on which this argument is founded; and events have certainly not been quite so complaisant to the later contention as to the earlier. If Turkey has gained strength from the erection of the two Danubian Principalities into the kingdom of Roumania, it can hardly be said that she is the stronger for the existence of that

Principality over which Ferdinand of Coburg maintains precarious and distracted rule

The replacement of a Liberal by a Conservative Administration produced its usual effect of scandalised astonishment upon the ousted party They felt, as Whigs in Opposition always have felt, such an incident to be a reproach to Parliamentary Government to which it behoved them, not merely as partisans but as patriots, to put a speedy end, and by a happy, but not an unprecedented, coincidence it struck them at the same moment that the settlement of a great political question, in which they had seemed to take but a languid interest while in office, would now brook no longer delay The national demand for a Reform Bill had become in their opinion too imperious to be safely left unsatisfied, and by way of proving its imperiousness they proceeded to enter upon what might have been thought a superfluous campaign of agitation in its favour

The labours of the stump orator were prosecuted with unintermittent assiduity throughout 1858, and agitators did their best, by the incessant emission of the popular catch word from their lips on scores of platforms, to justify their assertion that Reform was 'in the air' Endeavours to discuss it after a more methodical and reflective fashion than commends itself to the stump orator were not however wanting The volume of 'Oxford Essays' published in this year contained a paper by Lord Robert Cecil on 'The Theories of Parliamentary Reform' which is of much interest, not only as an exposition of his then opinions, but as an indication of his future conduct at a momentous political crisis The writer's views on the existing condition of the electoral system were substantially those held by the main

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body of the Conservative party, and, it may be added, in all probability by a clear majority of the Liberals of that day. The position, in fact, of both the schools of political opinion may be defined with substantial accuracy by saying that they were not opposed to such enlargement of the electorate as would extend to the then unrepresented classes of the community as large a share of the national representation as could be given them without making mere numbers predominant over every other element of power in the State. I believe that, if we exclude a few high Tories on the one hand and the, in those days, insignificant group of Radical Reformers on the other, the above formula would, with virtually complete accuracy, express the views of the two great political parties, and would have defined the principle on which, but for 'the party system,' they could and might have united to pass a Reform Act.

Of course it does not need saying that any two distinct groups of politicians might hold this common doctrine 'with a difference,' and with a difference of much practical importance. One of them, that is to say, might be of opinion that while the reconstruction of our electoral system on the above lines was theoretically defensible it was not practically needful, and certainly not urgent; that the existing anomalies of the system were the source of no appreciable injury either to the State or the individual; and that there was no national demand for their removal. The other group of politicians might contrariwise contend that the case for electoral reform was not less strong on the practical than on the theoretical side; that the anomalies of the existing system were mischievous as well as disfiguring; and that their removal was demanded, if not with passion, at any rate with earnestness, by the nation at large.

It is natural to expect, and it is not difficult to infer from the tone of this particular Oxford essayist, that he would belong to the former class of politicians. Probably it included most of the Conservative party of that day. A few of them may have been misled by the agitation into believing in the existence of a genuine and effective popular demand for an enlargement of the franchise. The majority of them held, one may suspect, and as the event proved rightly held, that in the year 1858 the cry which the agitators professed to hear was simply the echo of their own voices. As to the Liberals, they seem to have entertained two successive and not easily reconcilable views on the subject. They must have arrived, by 1859 at any rate, at the conclusion that the country was greatly interested in the question of Parliamentary Reform. At least, it is only charitable to assume as much, because in that year they threw out a moderate Franchise Bill on the ground of its inadequacy to the satisfaction of the national wishes, and expelled its authors from power. Inasmuch, however, as after succeeding to office their leaders shelved the question for six years to their apparently complete contentment, we are bound to assume that at some time after the general election and the vote of want of confidence which displaced Lord Derby, their opinion on this point underwent an entire change.

Lord Robert Cecil's Oxford essay pretty clearly ranks him, as has been said, among that plainer spoken section of the Tory party, who, while admitting that our electoral system was theoretically open to improvement, made no concealment of their opinion that it were better left alone. Reformers, the essayist pointed out, might be divided into three classes, two of them contemplating ends desirable in themselves, but impracticable of attainment and hazardous

of pursuit, the third frankly seeking such changes in the representative system as would, in the writer's opinion, be dangerously disturbing to the political equilibrium of the nation. The first description of reformer, the Educational, as the essayist calls him, started from the principle that government should be in the hands of the wisest men, but had never been able to propound any practical means of giving effect to that principle in our electoral system. This class of reformer is therefore dismissed by the writer as speedily as is consistent with respect for his character and motives. His presence made itself felt once more for a moment in certain clauses of the Conservative Reform Bill of the following year; but that brief appearance was his last. The painful duty of bowing him, however politely, out of court has not since devolved upon any political writer, and there is no reason to expect that it ever will again. The philosopher who theorised, thirty years ago, on the possibility of committing the work of government to the hands of the 'wisest men' is not likely to trouble the 'practical politician' any more. He is, indeed, understood to have transferred his energies to the task of discovering a finite arithmetical ratio between the diameter and the circumference of the circle.

The 'Symmetrical Reformer,' as Lord Robert Cecil names his second sort of doctrinaire, we have still with us, though somewhat in the state of the jaded Alexander, with no more worlds to conquer. His share in carrying that Reform of the representative system which was then in prospect was less important than that of the third, the 'Democratic' order of reformer ('Geographical,' as the essayist alternatively styles him, he hardly became till sixteen years later), whose ideal of a bare numerical system of

representation was in effect realised in 1867 It is interesting to remark, and it reflects credit upon the stability and consistency of Lord Robert Cecil's political judgment, that the views to which he was destined to sacrifice place and power nine years afterwards, are plainly indicated in his remarks on reform of the Democratic variety He would be prepared, he said, to accept even universal suffrage modified by a plural vote based upon a property qualification, but the notion of placing the dominant political power without any check or counterpoise in the hands of the least educated and least responsible class in the country, was not, he held, to be for a moment entertained Little did he then dream that his leader was destined to do this very thing, and perhaps that leader suspected it as little himself

Nevertheless, it was the Democratic Reformer's principles that distinctly triumphed in the Reform Act of 1867 He too, it was, who in 1884 succeeded, as Democratic Reformer, in adding 'two millions of capable citizens' to the register, and, as Geographical Ditto, in carving up the counties into approximately equal electoral districts In the two latter operations he was, of course, assisted by the Symmetrical Reformer, who, indeed, has taken much of the moral responsibility off his shoulders This coadjutor pointed out, with considerable effect, that the consequences of the Reform Act of 1867 had been to create a grossly unjust distribution of political power as between the urban and the rural population In other words, he contended that since the Democratic Reformer had, in the name of political justice, enormously aggravated an unfair disparity in representation as between two large classes of the community, he himself had thereby, in the character of the Symmetrical Re

former, acquired a right to make another enormous addition to the roll of household-voters for the purpose of correcting the anomaly.

In 1858, however, he had not gained such a hearing as he afterwards enjoyed. Lord Robert Cecil admitted, in his essay, the existence of many anomalies in our representative system, and he laid especial stress on the disproportion of the borough to the county electorate. But he was not prepared to correct anomalies for symmetry's sake alone, and without adequate security against the imperilling of those main objects of wise government and national stability for which representative systems exist. And this leads him to the conclusion, fatal, of course, from a Conservative point of view, to any proposals of innovation, that 'we must either change enormously, or not at all.' It is 'undoubtedly to be desired,' he continues, 'that every anomaly should be removed at which hostile critics can laugh or cavil; still more that every person in the kingdom should have his just share, and no more than his just share, in the government of the country. On the other hand, it is of vital importance that the Legislature should not be deteriorated, or the safety of property endangered.' And though the writer admits, of course, that it might be theoretically possible to devise a system of representation in which all three objects should be exactly and regularly attained, yet 'most statesmen,' he argues, 'will hesitate before they prefer a paper constitution to the time-hardened trusty machine whose working they have thoroughly tried.' Then with a parting stroke at that school of reformers who refused to see anything in the problem except a demand of the unenfranchised for enfranchisement, he concludes with the following pregnant observations.

Political justice to one side, and not to the other, is worse than a set off of injustice on both sides, political symmetry on a faulty plan is worse than chaos Better far to reconstruct the whole, better still to let that which has worked well work on But which ever course is taken, the condition in the representative system which it is our duty to maintain, even at the cost of any restriction or any anomaly, is that the intellectual status of the Legislature shall no be lowered, and that sufficient weight, direct or indirect, shall be given to property to secure it from the possibility of harm

The new Conservative Government, partly, it is to be presumed, in deference to the largely factitious agitation out of doors, and partly from their perception of the fact that, as the Ministry of a minority, they were at the mercy at any moment of a coalition of the contending factions opposite, determined to take up the Reform question themselves, and, in February of the following year, Mr Disraeli introduced a Bill Lord Robert Cecil should have been flattered by the compliment which it paid to his opinions, for, in truth, it might almost have been drafted by the author of the Oxford essay on the 'Theories of Parliamentary Reform' Or if the politician in him would have disclaimed responsibility for some of the provisions of the measure, the political thinker would have recognised the inspiration of his principles in all of them alike Disraeli in 1859 was as uncompromising an opponent of the 'Geographical,' or 'Symmetrical,' Reformer as his follower, and no less hostile than he to the crude doctrine that political power ought to be simply apportioned as per head of the population At the same time, he was equally sensible with him of the anomaly created by the inequality between the borough and county representation, and no less conscious of the impossibility of framing any acceptable Reform Bill which did not deal with it

Hence the measure introduced by him this year was the resultant of these forces. It proposed to leave the borough franchise untouched, but to reduce the fifty pound franchise of the counties to the level of the boroughs. Concurrently with this, however, and by way of makeweight for the popularisation of the suffrage in that branch of our elective system which had been supposed to give special representation to property, a variety of new franchises, founded upon certain special qualifications, and designed to extend the political influence of the order of small capitalists and of the professional and cultivated classes, were added to those already in existence. Thus, the possession of property to the extent of 10*l.* a year in the Funds, in Bank Stock, or in East India Stock, or of a sum of not less than 60*l.* lodged in a savings-bank, or of a pension amounting to 20*l.* a year and upwards in the Naval, Military, or Civil Service, was to qualify for a vote, as also was residence in a portion of a house whose aggregate rent was 20*l.* a year. And the franchise was further conferred upon graduates of the universities, ministers of religion, members of the legal and medical professions, and certain schoolmasters.

The weak points of such a measure as this, at any rate as it would present itself to the English mind, are too obvious to need indication. It was loyally defended from his place in the House by Lord Robert Cecil, but he must have doubted, one would think, whether its attempt to found an educational franchise—favourable as he was to the principle of such an endeavour—was happily conceived. Undoubtedly it excited more wonder than enthusiasm outside the House of Commons. People ridiculed it as fantastic, and pinned the expressive nickname of 'fancy franchises' to the new qualifications which it would introduce.

The great majority of the persons who constituted the selected classes being on the electoral roll already, Mr Disraeli's proposals were not likely to find any very energetic advocacy in that quarter, or, indeed, among Conservatives in general, while the maintenance of the borough qualification unreduced was, of course, sufficient to array the united forces of the Liberals and Radicals in opposition to the Bill —the latter because they really desired a popular extension of the suffrage, the former because they felt the party necessity of 'trumping their opponents' lead.' The Government were further unfortunate in having displeased two sections of their followers—represented respectively by Mr Walpole and Mr Henley, who resigned concurrently with the introduction of the Bill—on two distinct and even conflicting grounds. Mr Walpole strongly disapproved of the assimilation of the county and borough franchises, Mr Henley objected to drawing any hard and fast line of rental or rating qualification, and declaring that every man above it would have a vote, and no man below it, and prophesied, in a well remembered phrase, that this must inevitably lead later on to 'an ugly rush' to break through the barrier.

Still, with all its defects, the Bill might have been made a workable and satisfactory measure, and have postponed the final degradation of the franchise for another thirty or forty years. Nor is it easy to believe that, if party objects could have been excluded and party interests [illegible], there would have been any difficulty in procuring a general Parliamentary agreement to remodel and pass the Bill. It had been brought in by a minority Government, as it were on sufferance, whose leaders, unless they meant to [illegible] the enemy as soon as commenced, were bound [illegible]

revision, if not, indeed, its complete reconstruction, in accordance with the general sense of Parliament. What was wanting was simply the desire on the Opposition side of the House to co-operate with the Government. Had this desire been present and effective, the only real danger which the Bill would then have had to encounter would have been in the apathy with which, in Parliament as outside it, the prematurely named Reform 'movement' was regarded. There would in any case have been a strong effort made to shelve the whole question, and the attempt might possibly have prevailed. But, on the other hand, it is conceivable and not improbable that the leaders of the two parties loyally acting together might have succeeded in convincing the rank and file of their followers that now was the appointed time, and that not only the cause of Conservatism, but that of orderly progress as distinguished from violent change, would gain by a readjustment of the electoral system in advance of the popular demand.

As things stood, however, there was not, and never had been, any chance of the experiment being tried. The Reform Bill of 1859 was doomed from its birth, nay, predestined before its conception, to a place among the lost, though not so much from the 'eternal purpose and foreknowledge' of anyone as from the lack of both. Its rejection was the inevitable consequence of its presentment to a group of jealous and jarring political sections, led for this purpose, but this only, by the incarnation of Whig factiousness himself. The three or more parties who sat at that day on the left of the Speaker were united in nothing except their determination not to let the Tories get the credit of settling the only political question that promised to provide them with a chance of restoration to the offices

which they had been wrangling over, and intriguing themselves into, and jockeying each other out of, for the last dozen years, and from which the incompetence of some, the untrustworthiness of others, and the dissensions of all seemed at last in danger of excluding the entire gang

Lord John Russell sounded a note of opposition to the Bill on the night of its introduction, and moved a hostile amendment to it on the second reading A prolonged and interesting debate followed, in which it can hardly be said that the weight of argument was on the side of the Opposition, and Ministers were defeated on a division by 330 votes to 291 Lord Derby on this advised an immediate dissolution, and in the general election which followed, his party gained twenty nine seats They could still, however, be placed in a minority whenever their adversaries could bring themselves to combine , and, as a matter of fact, their adversaries brought themselves to do so in the first week of the Session Parliament met on May 31 , an amendment to the Address in the usual form expressive of a withdrawal of Parliamentary confidence from the Government was moved by Lord Hartington on June 7 , and three days later the Government were put in a minority of 13, in one of the largest divisions ever taken in the House of Commons

Ministers at once tendered their resignations, and after some curious negotiations, in which Lords Granville, Palmerston, and John Russell took part, and in which the third of these three statesmen is understood to have refused to serve under the first, though willing to accept office in a Government to be formed by the second, the crisis ended in the elevation of Lord Palmerston to the Premiership, which he held until his death six years afterwards Liberty and Progress having thus been safeguarded by the

restoration to power of their traditional patrons, it seems hardly worth recording, even as a mere matter of detail, that a Reform Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell in the year following, was shelved with exceeding unanimity and expedition, and that the entire question was suffered to remain from 1860 to 1866 in absolutely unbroken repose.

CHAPTER IV

The Whig feud healed—Lord John Russell's Reform Bill—Its neglect and withdrawal—Lord Robert Cecil in opposition—His militant attitude—The Paper Duties—Ministers and the 'attorneys'—Succeeds to the title of Lord Cranborne—New Parliament and death of Lord Palmerston—Reform Bill of 1866—Lord Cranborne on the working man—And on the Bill—Defeat and resignation of the Russell Government

BETWEEN Lord Palmerston's last accession to office and his death there elapsed a period of six years, which though one of the least eventful, is from another point of view one of the most interesting in our Parliamentary history Its interest, indeed, is mainly due to its very lack of incident, and to the signal illustration of the nature and working of the English party system which it thereby afforded At the close of the last chapter a brief glance was cast at the abortive Reform Bill of 1860 The briefest glance would be enough to devote to a measure which probably had not a single genuine admirer, and with the possible exception of its author, not even a friend, in the House of Commons The state of Wordsworth's Lucy—the 'maid whom there was none to praise and very few to love'—was exactly reproduced, in its peculiarity at least if not in its graciousness, by Lord John Russell's scheme It is hard to say whether its introduction was an act of conventional homage to political consistency, or a ceremony performed to celebrate

the happy pacification of a long-standing personal conflict. But perhaps the rite which solemnised Lord John's union with Lord Palmerston was more appropriately typified by the sacrifice of Lord Granville. Commanded by her Majesty, who was unwilling to decide between the conflicting claims of the two veteran statesmen, to form a Government, Lord Granville succeeded only, as no doubt he was only expected both by his sovereign and himself to succeed, in showing what Government was capable of being formed by others. Lord Palmerston apparently was not un-unwilling—he did not at any rate positively refuse—to serve under him. Lord John Russell was and did. Lord Granville's mission was in fact as instantaneously enlightening as the instructions given, together with a sword, by King Solomon to one of his attendants on a certain memorable occasion. It was at any rate made clear forthwith that Lord John Russell was not prepared to immolate his love of power on the altar of rivalry. Rather, to be sure, than yield precedence to Lord Granville, he would have remained out of office; but rather than remain out of office, he would give place to Lord Palmerston. Thus all was amicably arranged. Lord Granville made a graceful bow and retired to the office of President of the Council; Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister, and Lord John Russell Foreign Secretary; and so, with the ancient Whig feud healed, and a consolidated Whig Government established firmly in power, it became once more possible for the thoughtful Whig politician to recognise that all was for the best in the best of all possible Whig worlds.

The only thing which remained to be done was to pay the last tribute of decent espect to the pretext on which the new Government had driven their predecessors from

office, and of recognition of the services of the party leader who had led the attack, by allowing Lord John Russell to bring in a Reform Bill Hence the introduction of a measure which was received with apathy, was debated with ever increasing languor, and finally, after only narrowly escaping on more than one occasion the last indignity of a count out, expired in derision The truth in fact, had to be at last acknowledged that there was no effective demand for reform in any quarter The middle classes—that order of which Mr Lowe was a few years later destined to become the eloquent champion—were naturally content with things as they were, the working classes in spite of the efforts of Mr Bright and others to awaken their political ambitions, were largely indifferent to the whole subject, and the personal popularity of the Premier, who was known to be no Reformer, did the rest Thus it came about that from the end of the Parliamentary session of 1860 till the end of the Parliament itself in 1865, the demand for the extension of the suffrage seemed to have completely died out, and that at the general election of the latter year, it was possible for the veteran Prime Minister, who had ridden into power over the corpse of a Franchise Bill, slain for its inadequacy, to silence a Tiverton 'heckler' with the jauntily audacious utterance, 'My friend there asks me why we have not brought in another Reform Bill My answer is Because we are not geese!'

Such periods of enforced inaction are usually borne with more composure by the commander of a political army than by the younger and more ardent of his lieutenants The Tory party as a whole acquiesced with a mixture of philosophy and patriotism in the Palmerstonian *régime* That is to say, they perceived as practical politicians the

hopelessness of contending against the Prime Minister's popularity, and as good citizens they were conscious that the best interests of the country were served by his ascendency. A Liberal Administration governing on Conservative principles is indeed the conscientious Tory's ideal, just as a Conservative Administration legislating to Liberal orders is—or should be—the object of his deepest aversion. The former arrangement represents the maximum of political stability attainable under a democratic suffrage and the party system; the latter is calculated to aggravate the dangers of democracy and the vices of faction to their utmost.

Those who can recall our political history during the last years of Lord Palmerston's life will not have forgotten the terms in which the situation used to be discussed in private by those moderate members of the two parties who approached nearest to each other and therefore to the joint creation of a Centre group. They frankly and unreservedly agreed in recognising that Palmerston's rule secured the dominance of virtually Conservative principles while protecting their official exponents against the factiousness of Liberal attack; and if any Tory of that day was ever in a mood either to doubt or to resent the existence of such a state of things, a single glance at the malcontent yet impotent band of resentful Radicals by which the veteran Minister was surrounded, was always sufficient to convince him of, and to reconcile him with, the fact.

Still the situation was naturally and necessarily irksome to a 'fighting' member of the Opposition; and one may be permitted perhaps to surmise that on not a few occasions in the years 1860–65, Lord Robert Cecil may have been no stranger to those feelings of impatience which twenty years later were to agitate the breast of a young follower of his

own, and to find vent in the irregular campaigning operations of Lord Randolph Churchill

Anyhow we find the member for Stamford displaying every now and then during those years an eagerness for the fray which would have done no discredit in point of activity and vivacity to the member for Woodstock Mr Gladstone, then as now, not only combative himself, but the cause of combativeness in others, supplied him with challenges not a few On the Church rate question, and generally on all matters in which the Anglican Establishment was concerned, Lord Robert Cecil had by a strange irony succeeded to the position occupied twenty years before by 'the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories' It was to him and not to his leader, whose Churchmanship, though thoroughly orthodox in principle, was at all periods of his career distinctly opportunist in practice, that the High Anglican party in Parliament and outside it began to turn whenever any new legislation directly or indirectly affecting the Church of England was afoot

Nor was it in this alone that his vigorous Toryism displayed itself When in the year 1860 the Chancellor of the Exchequer first proposed the repeal of the paper duties, Lord Robert Cecil was one of the few members who had the courage to resist that measure on any other than opportunist grounds There was indeed plenty of standing room from which to oppose it, without questioning the value of the popular 'boon' which Mr Gladstone was offering The repeal of the paper duties—a measure for which Lord Palmerston cannot be suspected of any personal enthusiasm—was, according to the Conservative contention, the price paid to the Radical malcontents for continuing to the Government their sulky support It could only be

[illegible]

The [illegible] the House of [illegible] The Opposition [illegible] that the state of the [illegible] immediate abandonment [illegible] somewhat to the surprise [illegible] servatives, the Paper Duties Repeal [illegible] second reading. The [illegible] that this action was "unconstitutional" [illegible] adjective employed by some politicians [illegible] action on the part of any person in power [illegible] which such politicians would have liked such person in power to refrain from. There was never much [illegible] about the rights of the House of Lords in the [illegible] tion; and such as there was was [illegible] disposed of in favour of the Lords by their [illegible] Three propositions which may be [illegible] with complete confidence emerge from the controversy:

(1.) The House of Lords, although [illegible] taken to have tacitly acknowledged the [illegible] Commons to originate Bills of Supply, [illegible] expressly recognised any limitation [illegible] dealing with them.

(2.) The House of [illegible]

[illegible]

(3.) Their right to reject an aid or supply, in other words a Money Bill, without amendment has never been challenged by the Commons, and is implied in the fact that the assent of the Upper House is just as necessary to the validity of a Money Bill as of any other enactment.

From these propositions it of course follows that the action of the Lords in rejecting the Paper Duties Bill was, putting its policy out of the question, every whit as constitutional as its rejection of the first Reform Bill. If anything unconstitutional is to be found in the entire transaction and the consequences thereon ensuing, it is to be sought rather in the three resolutions subsequently agreed to by the Commons on the motion of the Government. The first of these declared that 'The right of granting aids and supplies to the Crown is in the Commons alone, as an essential part of their constitution; and the limitation of all such grants as to the matter, manner, measure, and time is only in them.' The second was to the effect that 'although the Lords have exercised the power of rejecting Bills of several descriptions relating to taxation, by negativing the whole, yet the exercise of that power by them has not been frequent and is justly regarded by this House with peculiar jealousy as affecting the right of the Commons to grant the supplies and to provide the ways and means for the service of the year' The third ran: 'That to guard for the future against the undue exercise of that power by the Lords, and to secure to the Commons their rightful control over taxation and supply, this House has in its own hands the power so to impose and remit taxes and to frame Bills of Supply that the right of the Commons as to matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate.'

Of these resolutions it may be observed that the first

asserts what is not the fact; that the second by implication contradicts it, and that the third is unnecessary if the first is true, and either untrue or unconstitutional if it is not

This is clear if we examine the three resolutions in detail. Thus, it is not true that 'the right of granting aids and supplies to the Crown is in the Commons alone;' but only the right of proposing such grants, for they cannot be legally completed or take effect without the co operation of the House of Lords This, indeed, is implicitly admitted by the second resolution, which recognises the existence of a 'power' in the House of Lords to reject Money Bills, and goes on to affirm, not that such rejection is unconstitutional —as it would be if 'the right of granting aids and supplies' were 'in the Commons alone'—but merely that it is of infrequent occurrence and 'jealously regarded by the Lower House' The third resolution would be superfluous if it were designed to guard against the 'undue exercise of a power' that did not exist, while if intended to imply that any such exercise of its constitutional privileges by the House of Lords as may be 'regarded with peculiar jealousy' by the House of Commons becomes thereby an 'undue' exercise of such privileges which the latter House 'has it in its power' so to frame Money Bills as to prevent, it is clear that this resolution embodies a proposition which is contrary either to fact or to constitutional principle For except in the barren and limited sense in which an individual may say that he has 'power' to disobey a law, or to violate a contract, or to refuse to be bound by an understanding, the embodied proposition is simply untrue In any other than this sense it amounts to affirming that one House has 'the power' under the constitution of limiting the constitutional power of the other, which is a contradiction in terms and absurd

What, however, the resolution practically meant was not long after made clear. It meant that whether the Commons had or had not a constitutional power of preventing the Lords from rejecting a Money Bill, the Government intended to act as if they had. They intended in other words so to frame the most important of their Money Bills in the following year as that the power of the House of Lords to accept or reject it should be, not indeed in form, but in fact extinguished. After laying his financial statement before the House in the session of 1861, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, acting in conformity with the principle asserted in the aforesaid third resolution, embodied all his Budget propositions, including resolutions for the repeal of the Paper Duties, in one Bill.[1] Great exception was taken to this course by a section of the Opposition, of whom Lord Robert Cecil made himself an eloquent and powerful spokesman. He protested against the attack on the privileges of the House of Lords, in the name not only of the rights of that House but of the representative principle itself, which he stoutly declared to have as much at stake in upholding the free action of one branch of the Legislature as of the other. This view, which contains a truth not unworthy the attention even of the democrat of our own days, was effectively set forth in the following passages.

It seems to me that the right hon. gentleman the member

[1] It was no doubt natural and legitimate enough that Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, should have been held chiefly responsible for this high-handed proceeding. Still it is only fair to remember (what, however, a recent critic seems to have forgotten) that the conciliatory and Conservative Prime Minister himself moved the resolutions of 1860, and that if the third of them did not mean that Mr. Gladstone's financial tactics of 1861 were arranged and agreed to by his chief and his colleagues in the previous year, it meant nothing.

for Birmingham and others who take a strong view against the House of Lords wholly mistake the question of last year They seem to imagine the question was one of jurisdiction, that the two Houses were fighting in the arena by themselves, and that there was no one else whose behests they ought to consider and obey The Government seem to think it was a fight of procedure and forms, and precedent and parchment We are accused of reaction on this side of the House. It is said we fancy we are lying in past centuries, and that we are applying to the present the passions of the past But in listening to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we might be excused for thinking that we are still living and fighting in the days of the Stuarts They do not see that behind, and acting through the House of Lords, there was the great educated public of the country, of which that House, and this House too, are merely the vehicles and instruments, and not seeing that they imagine that the fight will be settled by a conflict between the two Houses, and that they can fetter the action of the Lords by an ingenious device.

The Government, however, were resolved to persevere with their ingenious device On the adoption of the financial resolutions, they introduced a Budget Bill in which the proposed repeal of the paper duties was associated with various other readjustments of taxation, but before reaching this stage of matters, the Government had evinced a disposition to press forward the preliminary proceedings in Committee of Ways and Means in a manner which provoked bitter rebuke from Lord Robert Cecil, who spoke of the devices by which the scheme had been characterised from beginning to end as 'more worthy of an attorney than of a statesman' Referring to this phrase in a subsequent debate, he admitted that the thought to be too violent, and that w the heat of debate, dropped an e

reflection, he felt to be stronger than was necessary, he ought to take the first opportunity either to apologise or to retract. 'Therefore' he went on to say, in words still remembered and quoted by his opponents, 'he felt that he was only doing justice to his own feelings when he owned that on that occasion he did a great injustice (cries of "hear, hear") to the attorneys. They were a very honourable set of men, and he was sure' (he was evidently going on to say, amid the interruptions which ensued) 'that they were incapable of the chicanery of which he had accused the Government.'

This explanation shed no oil on the troubled waters, and adverse critics professed at the time, and still do profess, to detect in it a deliberate design of driving home the original sarcasm. If, however, they had remembered their 'Boswell,' they would have seen that it is at least patient of a more innocent interpretation. 'Do you know,' said Goldsmith, in the story told of him in the great biography, to Lord Shelburne, 'that I never could conceive the reason why they call your lordship "Malagrida"; for Malagrida was a very good sort of man.' 'This,' said Dr. Johnson, commenting on it years afterwards, 'was only a blunder in emphasis. It meant, "I wonder they should use Malagrida as a term of reproach."' Now if the inventors of this nickname had subsequently apologised to the shade of that Italian Jesuit and visionary for having used his name as a term of reproach, they would have done *mutatis mutandis* exactly what Lord Robert Cecil did. Yet it would in such a case have been clearly perverse to accuse them of thereby intending a reiteration of their charges against Lord Shelburne. The modern instance indeed is the stronger of the two. For the attorneys were alive; and it is

surely not denied, even by the most hostile of the critics aforesaid, that they were in fact compelled to an apology. Well, they got it; and the mere circumstance that certain other persons who were expecting an apology did not get it may have been a disappointment to them, but could not possibly constitute an additional grievance. Whether Lord Robert Cecil's sentence was designedly so framed as to arouse the expectations which he was about to disappoint, is no doubt an interesting and arguable question; but it is one which no biographer can hope to answer. It remains and must remain between the speaker and his own conscience.

One is not surprised to find, however, that Ministers and Ministerialists of the more solemn order were not a little scandalised at the sally, and, indeed, that they were generally somewhat discomposed at the vivacity which the member for Stamford threw into his attacks on the Government. As usual in such cases they looked eagerly for some sign that the leader of the Opposition disapproved of his follower's ardour. But Mr Disraeli was the last man from whom any such indication was to be expected. He had raised Ministerialist hopes by observing, on the occasion when the devices of the Government were denounced as more worthy of an attorney than a statesman, that 'the discussion appeared to be characterised by a great deal of unnecessary heat,' but when later on in the debate the Chancellor of the Exchequer *took* upon himself to 'invite the noble lord the member for Stamford, to reconsider the vocabulary in which he has addressed us,' Mr Disraeli promptly interposed with a congratulation of his noble friend upon Mr Gladstone's public acknowledgment of 'the efficiency of his powers of expression. I confess,' he continued, 'that I have listened with satisfaction to the

noble lord both last night and to-night, as it appeared to me that I never heard more constitutional opinions expressed in more effective language. I hope that on Thursday the noble lord the member for Stamford will be prepared to take that part in our debates in which I think he has greatly distinguished himself.'

And in truth the noble lord the member for Stamford was just then prepared to take part in debate on any subject which appealed to his keenly critical intellect, or touched those Tory principles to which he held with such conviction, and for which he was always so ready to do battle. In some respects, indeed, the period of 1860–66 forms the most interesting stage in Lord Robert Cecil's career; for in it one watches not only the gradual development of his great powers as a political thinker and reasoner, but the naturally more rapid process by which he perfected his brilliant aptitudes for parliamentary conflict. The statesman in his composition had still of course to reach maturity; as, indeed, statecraft is an art in which a man may, and no doubt should, continue to be a learner to his life's end. But considered as a debater and political controversialist in general, the Lord Robert Cecil of the last Palmerstonian Parliament was to all intents and purposes the Lord Salisbury of to-day. His criticisms on Mr. Gladstone's ill-conceived and ill-conditioned attempt to introduce the principle of the taxation of charitable endowments; his contribution to the debate on the motion of censure upon the Government for their dealings with the Danish Question; and even such less important, but no less characteristic efforts as his speech on the long-forgotten Brazilian difficulty—when he accused Lord Russell of adopting 'a sort of tariff of insolence' in his correspon-

dence with foreign Powers—show [illegible] those oratorical powers which he [illegible] wields

On June 14 1865, Lord Robert Cecil [illegible] death of his elder brother, Lord C[illegible] title of the family On July [illegible] 1859 was dissolved. Its [illegible] has seldom if ever been [illegible] Septennial Act, and [illegible] special combination of [illegible] Conservative Liberal Lord [illegible] which Lord Russell [illegible] fallen, and the general [illegible] in consequence—[illegible]

Long, however [illegible] now entered [illegible] doubted [illegible] not come [illegible] took place [illegible] [illegible] and the [illegible] were [illegible] under its spell but he did not live to meet the new Parliament. On October 18 he died and the Reform question was immediately thrust upon a Legislature, the Liberal element in which was largely Palmerstonian and as such disposed to look with coldness and misgiving on the policy of popularising the franchise. In such an assembly it was to be anticipated that a Reform Government would meet with the difficulties that in fact beset it, that their attempts to settle the question would be thwarted and ultimately defeated by a mutinous section of their followers, and that thereupon that hateful compe[illegible] of [illegible] for popular favour at the expence of public

interest which the country rues to this day, would, with all its disastrous consequence, set in.

If a forward step is to be taken in the democratic direction, it is not desirable that the attempt should be made either by a Liberal Government too numerically strong, or by one which internal discord renders too weak. The Administration that enters upon such an undertaking should be supported by a party united enough to enable it to carry a moderate measure, but should be at the same time held in check by an Opposition formidable enough to deter it from 'heroic' schemes.

This latter condition might or might not have been fulfilled in the Parliament of 1865; there was no opportunity of testing the question, for the non-fulfilment of the former condition became immediately apparent. No time was lost, on the part of the Moderate Liberals, in showing that a Russell-Gladstone Administration, with Reform as the principal item in the programme, was not to their taste. The *Times*, which in those days still retained its full prestige as the unerring exponent of middle-class Liberal sentiment, and to which in its then period of supremacy it was a far more important matter not to commit the capital journalistic blunder of pledging itself irrevocably to the losing side than it is to-day, made a 'dead set' against the succession of Lord John (now Lord) Russell to the Premiership. 'Leader' after 'leader' appeared in those usually reserved and prudent columns in deprecation of it; and the editorial protest was emphasised by a scathing historical review of the many political errors and obliquities with which the name of Lord Russell had been associated. Her Majesty, if I remember rightly, was almost passionately entreated to refrain from sending the naturally and universally

expected summons to the veteran statesman, and to lay her commands for the reconstitution of the Liberal Government upon someone else When the *Times* had burnt its last boat, it was officially announced that Lord Russell would be the new Prime Minister, and that Mr Gladstone would succeed as Chancellor of the Exchequer to the leadership of the House of Commons

The Moderates, however, though defeated for the moment, had no idea of surrendering The bulk of the party rallied, of course, to the reconstituted Ministry, and the 'leading journal' had to fall into line with the rest But there was an able and powerful group of members on the Speaker's right—distinguished, several of them by their eloquence and one of them by his almost lyrical enthusiasm for middle class government—who had little belief in the wisdom and statesmanship of Mr Gladstone, and none at all in the political virtue of Reform And these men, foreseeing, as of course they did, and indeed as the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the eventful session of 1866 informed them, that the Reform question would now be raised in earnest, armed themselves for a conflict in which they were destined to win a Pyrrhic victory

Yet it might have been thought, when Mr Gladstone on March 12 introduced the Ministerial Bill for the extension of the franchise that the Government would succeed in averting a conflict, at any rate within their own ranks. It was not a measure which need have greatly [illegible] anyone who believed—as some at least of the [illegible] Liberals professed to believe—in the prudence of [illegible] downward extension of the suffrage. It [illegible] franchise in the towns, and a franchise of [illegible] counties Mr Gladstone's calculation was [illegible]

a total of 400,000 new voters to the electoral roll, 172,000 by the county franchise, 204,000 by the borough rating franchise, and 24,000 by the lodger and savings-bank franchises. Lord Cranborne, who opposed the measure strenuously on the first reading, preferred the arithmetic of his own statistical contention that it would give the control of 168 boroughs, or a clear majority of the borough representation of England and Wales, to the working-classes. But he laid his finger upon a yet graver defect in the measure, though one which was curable and in fact cured before the final rejection of the Bill: namely, that it contained no scheme for the redistribution of seats, or in other words that it left Parliament uncertain what or whether any compensation would be provided by the Government for the swamping of the county constituencies with a large number of urban voters. 'The golden link,' said Lord Cranborne ironically, 'which connects the Chancellor of the Exchequer's many phases of opinion and great varieties of character is his persistent undying hatred of the rural interest.' The counties, he pointed out, were, as matters stood, to a great extent unrepresented, and should have sixty or seventy members added to them to bring them up to the level of the borough representation as judged by the population standard. Yet the new Reform Bill, so far from doing anything to remedy this inferiority, would enormously aggravate it.

The Liberal malcontents were not slow to seize upon this objection, and before the Bill came on for second reading, Lord Grosvenor gave notice of an amendment to the effect that the House was of opinion that it was inexpedient to consider the Bill for the reduction of the franchise 'until it had before it the whole scheme of the Govern-

ment for the amendment of the representation of the people' It is not probable, one must in fairness admit, that the concession of this eminently reasonable demand would have disarmed the Adullamite opposition to the Bill Later on, when party passions were more thoroughly aroused, and when the opponents of the Government had almost tasted blood in the narrow division on the above amendment, the concession was made, but it was then of course too late It might not have saved the Bill at any time but the obstinate withholding of it was certainly an example of those unwisely high handed tactics which have been not infrequently, but seldom with the justification of success, adopted by Mr Gladstone in the conduct or attempted conduct of the various legislative measures with which he has been concerned during his political career

The Easter recess intervened between this notice of amendment and the date fixed for the second reading, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer took occasion during that interval to address a great public meeting at Liverpool and to denounce Lord Grosvenor and Lord Stanley, the intending seconder of the amendment, as 'coming forward combinedly for the purpose of defeating an act of grace, and what is likewise an act of justice to a great community of the country' He went on to say that the Government staked their existence as a Government and their political character on the adoption of the Bill as it stood, that the sound given forth by their trumpet had not been, and he trusted would not be, uncertain, that they had passed the Rubicon, that they had broken the bridges and burned the boats behind them, that, in short, they were pledged, as deeply as this wealth of metaphors could pledge anyone, to stand or fall by their Bill

All this, whether prudent or not, was legitimate enough; but not so the charges against certain of his political opponents with which Mr. Gladstone coupled it. He, in fact, repeated before his Liverpool audience a memorable accusation which he had made against Lord Robert Montagu and others in a previous debate in the House of Commons, namely, that they seemed to dread the working men as 'an invading and destroying army instead of their own flesh and blood'—which, however, by the way, invading and destroying armies usually are.

For this he was severely taken to task in the debate on the second reading of the Bill by Lord Cranborne, whose admirable definition of the only manly and self-respecting attitude to be adopted by a politician towards the working-class voter shall here be extracted entire. The member for Stamford recalled the incident of the former debate and of Mr. Gladstone's imputation, and after repudiating with just resentment the charge of having 'readily and earnestly accepted it,' he went on to deliver himself of the following spirited and eloquent protest against an attitude and mode of address which even at that day was much too commonly adopted towards the working classes, and which nowadays may be fairly described as the normal and habitual posture of a majority—drawn, it must be admitted, from both parties—of English politicians:

For myself I will venture to make my confession of faith on the subject of the working classes. I feel that there are two tendencies to avoid. I have heard much on the subject of the working classes in this House which I confess has filled me with feelings of some apprehension. It is the belief of many hon. gentlemen opposite that the working classes are to be our future sovereign, that they are to be the great power in the State against which no other power will be able to stand; and

it is with feelings of no small horror and disgust that I have heard from many hon. gentlemen phrases which sound, I hope unduly, like adulation of the sovereign they expect to reign over them. Now if there is one claim which the House of Commons has on the respect of the people of the country, it is the great historic fame it enjoys; if it has done anything to establish the present balance of power among all classes of the community, and prevent any single element in the Constitution from overpowering all the rest, it is that in presence of all powers, however great and terrible they may have been, the House of Commons has always been free and independent in its language. It never in past times, when kings were powerful, fawned upon them. It has always resisted their unjust pretensions; it always refused to allow any courtierly instincts to suppress in it that solicitude for the freedom of the people of the country which it was instituted to cherish. I should deeply regret, if at a time when it is said we are practically about to change our sovereign, and when some may think that new powers are about to rule over the country, a different spirit were to influence and inspire the House of Commons. Nothing could be more dangerous to the reputation of the House, nothing more fatal to its authority, than that it should be suspected of sycophancy to any power, either from above or below, that is likely to become predominant in the State.

Proceeding to the merits of the Bill and the amendment, Lord Cranborne dwelt, as other speakers had done before him, with much force upon the inconvenience and unfairness to the House of the course which the Government had insisted on pursuing. At the same time, and with equally telling effect, he pointed out that their outward show of imperiousness hid much inward hesitation, and went on to recount the history of their successive retreats from the various positions they had taken up. They began, he said, by 'holding very cavalier language on the Franchise Bill. They at first did not in the least care to deal with the redistribution of seats. It is true the right honourable

his ultimate victory be inevitable. Again, it is always obviously wrong to 'put your foot down,' or to make as though you would do so, unless you can keep it down. Ministers must have known that they could never make *a signum stantis vel cadentis Camarillæ* out of the doctrine that an Administration may call upon a Legislature to pass a Franchise Bill with its eyes shut and without a fact or a figure to show how the general distribution of political power among the various classes and local communities throughout the United Kingdom would be affected by it. That would have been too monstrous a pretension. Full particulars on the point would have, they well knew, to be communicated by them to Parliament long before the final stages of the Franchise Bill received or could receive Parliamentary approval, and any such paltering with the House of Commons in the matter as might seem to indicate a desire to limit or hamper a Parliamentary control [illegible] submitted to, ought by all means to have been avoided.

It gave excuse to hostile critics like Lord [illegible] to treat the secrecy in which that part of the Ministerial policy had been shrouded as something highly suspicious, and when by a superfluity of maladroitness an important member of the Government proceeded to justify a policy of concealment in the language of defiance, the hands of opponents were of course still further strengthened. When Lord [illegible] declared that he was not prepared to follow a guide who said he was going into an unexplored region, but declined to state what he knew of its nature and its inhabitants, and would give no other information than that he had [illegible] boats and broken down the bridges, [illegible] remark which first strikes [illegible] solid sense and justice [illegible]

impelled her Majesty to refuse the resignation of her Ministers at its first offer, and to direct them to reconsider its propriety, was shared by a very considerable body of her subjects Many people were and continued unable to see that the proposed substitution of rateable for rental value as the basis of the franchise, could possibly be a vital point—the more so as the amendment carried against the Government was quite general in its terms, and did not commit them to any hard and fast line of rateable qualification Ministers, it was argued, merely wished to extend the suffrage to a certain number of unenfranchised citizens, and to do this, they proposed to give votes to all householders sitting at a 7*l* rental If Parliament, however, preferred to go by the rate book, why, in the name of common sense, could not the Government defer to their wishes, ascertain what rating qualification—6*l*, 5*l*, or what not—would enfranchise as many persons as would get votes under a 7*l* rental, and remodel their Bill accordingly?

It was shown by Mr Gladstone in his subsequent statement in the House of Commons that this operation would *have been no easy one In some boroughs, the rateable* value equivalent to a 7*l* rental for enfranchising purposes would have been 6*l*, in others 4*l*, and in others lower still Nevertheless, it would no doubt have been possible to fix an average rateable value which, taking the whole electorate throughout, would have represented an extension of the suffrage equal to that contemplated by the Government in their original Bill Hence it may be doubted whether this portion of the Ministerial explanation really went, or was intended to go, to the root of the matter It is the latter part of Mr Gladstone s statement which contained its r nd significance, and no one, be he Tory or Libe

could have done to meet their professed objections would have disarmed their real hostility to it It has been already admitted that the Government went out of their way to make the work of their opponents unduly easy for them, let it be again admitted that that work would in any case have been done The so called Adullamites of that day—the seceders from the Ministerial ranks on this question—did not want any Parliamentary Reform at all Few among them, perhaps, were quite such passionate admirers of middle class government as Mr Lowe, but substantially they agreed with him on that point. They held, at any rate, that the *régime* set up in 1832 had worked well, that the country had advanced under it in prosperity and strength, and that there was no justification for overthrowing it in order to try a vast and doubtful democratic experiment in its stead And there is a good deal to be said to day for their contention It is at least true that middle-class government—*bourgeois* government, if we like to call it so—had an unfairly short trial in this country The aristocratic oligarchy which preceded it played a glorious part in the making and the defence of our empire, but it was allowed 140 years from the Revolution to the Reform Act to do its work in Five and thirty was the whole period granted to its successor

The Adullamite Whigs wished to give it a longer trial from a genuine confidence in it, and as regards some of them, a positive admiration for it. Tories naturally wished to extend its lease of power on their general principle of disinclination to risk going further and faring worse, and between these two opposing parties the Reform Bill of 1866 was doomed. Lord Cranborne, as has been seen, exerted himself with energy, and doubtless with the heartiest good will, to defeat it. Better had he helped it to pass, as I dare

CHAPTER V

Enters Lord Derby's Cabinet as Secretary for India—The casuistry of the Great Surrender—Lord Derby's and Mr Disraeli's respective shares in it—The Reform resolutions—Resignations of Lords Cranborne and Carnarvon and General Peel—The confessions of Sir John Pakington—'Ten Minutes Bill'—Household suffrage with checks—Their disappearance—Votes and speeches of Lord Cranborne—Final protest—The Bill becomes law

HAVING regard to the composition of the House of Commons, and to the nature of the events which had brought about the downfall of Lord Russell's Administration, it was to be expected that his successor would endeavour to strengthen the Government which her Majesty had commanded him to form by the enlistment of recruits from the opposite party. The Liberals still possessed a large nominal majority in the House of Commons, and Lord Derby was of course well aware that he could only maintain himself in office on one of two conditions. Either he must definitively detach from the Liberal party its Adullamite section, and by the admittance of some member of it into a Coalition Cabinet, purchase its consistent and united support in Parliament, or he would have to content himself with a tenure of power at the mere will and pleasure of these malcontents, who might at any moment, or for any whim, renew their allegiance to the leaders whom they had abandoned. Naturally, he would have preferred the

former alternative, and overtures were made by him to Mr. Lowe and others with the view of inducing them to join his Administration. Had they consented, the whole course of political history might, and in all probability would, have been changed; for a representation of the Adullamite group in Lord Derby's Cabinet would have so strengthened the hands of Lord Cranborne and the other dissentients from the principle of household suffrage as to have rendered it a moral impossibility for that historic 'leap in the dark' to be taken.

Lord Derby's proposals were, however, declined, and he was compelled to form a purely Conservative Cabinet, in which Lord Cranborne was offered, and accepted, the post of Secretary of State for India. It was high preferment for a politician who had not undergone the usual preparation for Cabinet office by service in a subordinate ministerial post; but so brilliant was the reputation which his parliamentary abilities had won for him, that it surprised few and dissatisfied none. Such indications of administrative capacity as success in the House of Commons affords are too often illusory; but in this instance they were amply justified. The new Secretary for India had been hardly a fortnight in office, and had had to spend part even of that brief period in seeking and obtaining re-election by his constituents of Stamford, when it fell to his lot to introduce the Indian Budget of the year, and the remarkable mastery of this intricate subject which was displayed in his speech on that occasion surprised many, even of those who imagined that they had taken the full measure of his abilities.

In his speech to his constituents on July 12, 1866, he referred to the fall of the late Government, which he attributed, as from the point of view of the parliamentary strategist he fairly might attribute it, to the concealment practised by

the Government with respect to their Reform policy, and he went on to promise that the Conversative party would treat the question in a more open and confidential spirit Within less than a fortnight after these words were uttered, there occurred that singular outbreak of popular 'horseplay' —for it was really nothing else—which a combination of administrative weakness at the Home Office, with ill judged tactical dispositions in Scotland Yard, had, if not precipitated, at least rendered possible, and which has gone down to history under the far too portentous title of 'The Hyde Park Riots' That the incident materially affected the counsels of the Government in the sense of influencing the direction and determining the magnitude of their Reform Bill it might be too much to say, but one can hardly doubt that, like all other such noisy demonstrations, it succeeded in persuading Ministers that more people cared about Reform than they had suspected, and that the recess must be devoted, as in fact it was, to maturing their legislative plans on the subject

There is probably no event in the entire political history of our country which has provoked, and will always continue to provoke, such keen controversy as the introduction and passing of the Second Reform Act by Mr Disraeli and the Administration and party which assisted him to carry it The *gran rifiuto* of 1846, which is sometimes classed with the *volte face* of 1867, cannot, as a matter of fact, compare with it for wealth of controversial issues It does not, I think, even raise such difficult and disputable questions as to the personal character, conduct, and motives of the statesmen who played the principal part in it, while in point of strictly political casuistry, the difference between the later and the earlier incident is the difference between

at the same time it opens out a wide field for controversy upon the question whether actual facts and probabilities can be brought within its protection. With Peel, it is possible—at least for a strict doctor of political ethics—to adopt a 'short method.' The power which he received from the Conservative electors was given him expressly to defend Protection. He used it to establish Free Trade. Politically, that may have been wise, patriotic, self sacrificing, what you will; personally, it was immoral and dishonourable.

No such charge as this could have been justly brought against the authors of the Reform Act of 1867. They had received no specific mandate from the Conservative electorate to resist any reduction of the franchise, or even to insist that reduction should not go beyond a specified point. The only mandate given to them was the general commission that every Conservative Administration receives at all times from every Conservative electorate—the commission to maintain the Constitution, to uphold the great social interests which are founded on property and contract, and to withstand such legislative proposals, and such only, as may threaten those interests or that Constitution with immediate or prospective damage. Nor can it, I think, be reasonably disputed that the Government which succeeded to power in 1866 were clothed with full moral authority to make, in the name and on the behalf of the Conservative party throughout the country, such terms with Democracy as might to them, the negotiators, seem best calculated to avert or mitigate, or if neither of these operations were in their judgment possible, to postpone, any dangers with which, from the point of view of Conservatism, our institutions might be threatened.

If this be the correct view of the situation in 1867, it is

clear that the latitude of legislative action which might fairly be claimed by the new Administration was very extensive; and that, startling as was the concession which they in fact made to the Radical Reformers, it would, on one condition, admit of being validly defended. Given, that is to say, a *bonâ fide* belief on the part of the authors of the Reform Act of 1867 that the Constitution would incur less immediate danger, that the great national interests dependent on the maintenance of public honesty and respect for private rights would be, in the long run, better safeguarded by boldly and at once enfranchising the urban householder than by taking any one of the other courses open to them, why then, no doubt that Act might be practically and substantially justified, as we know, of course, that it has since been again and again theoretically and formally justified—by Conservative apologists on genuinely Conservative grounds.

But did any such *bonâ fide* belief exist in the Ministerial mind? Did it exist, I mean, in any shape worthy to be called a belief? Did it exist as a reasoned conviction so far as it applied to contemporary facts, and as a reasonably grounded calculation so far as it concerned the future? Or was it merely a hit-or-miss speculation, an expedient desperately adopted by a Government acting under the conjoint influences of an honest if not very heroic anxiety to buy off a popular agitation, and a determined if not particularly patriotic resolve to score a point, at all hazards, against their political adversaries?

Fortunately—or unfortunately—the answer to these questions is not entirely a matter of conjecture. We know what was thought of the Reform Act of 1867 by the head of the Administration that passed it; for on two separate occasions,

and in two memorable phrases, he opened his mind upon the subject · and though it was long the fashion to believe that the head of the Administration that passed the Act was not the 'head' that planned it, that belief has of late been considerably shaken That 'cast' of the characters in the drama which assigned the part of Mephistopheles to Mr Disraeli and of Faust to Lord Derby was picturesquely conceived, but there was never any historic warrant for it, and whatever later evidence has come out is opposed to it It has been affirmed in more than one authoritative quarter that Lord Derby and not Mr Disraeli was the real father of household suffrage, and the positive statements of third parties to this effect are supported by antecedent probabilities It must never be forgotten that the Prime Minister's early training and associations were those of a Parliamentary Reformer, that prudence was not among his prominent qualities as a statesman, nor punctilious scruple, it must be added, his distinctive characteristic as a parliamentary tactician, and that in his capacity as leader of the party, his credit was far more deeply engaged in winning the party battle than was that of his lieutenant Moreover, there has been too little notice taken of the various significant admissions let fall by him here and there in his speeches in the House of Lords with reference to the history of Ministerial counsels on the Reform question It is impossible to study these utterances, considered as indications of the date at which he formed his conviction as to the necessity of introducing an extensive measure of Reform, and took the necessary steps to bring this conviction before his principal colleague, without arriving on one's own part at the conclusion that Lord Derby's responsi

bility for the great change was, in fact as well as in theory, paramount.

But of course the strongest evidence for this is to be found in his subsequent utterances. In public he admitted that the passing of the Act was a 'leap in the dark,' and in private he commended it because it 'dished the Whigs.' Lord Derby was a considerable orator in his day, but one may safely affirm that no other utterance of his will live, or deserves to live, as long as these two remarkable sayings. That they revealed the inmost thoughts of the man who uttered them it is impossible to doubt; his whole character and record, and his well-known views (substantially identical with those of Mrs. Battle as a whist-player) on the game at which he was so experienced and so expert a hand, go bail for their sincerity. That they gave expression to the secret sentiments of every 'fighting' member of his party, or in other words of that large majority who in every party 'play to win,' is equally certain. And the only remaining question is whether the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons advised the enfranchisement of the householder in any other spirit than that in which his chief proposed and his followers accepted it.

In a phrase which will go down to posterity along with the 'leap in the dark' and the 'dishing of the Whigs,' Mr. Disraeli boasted that he 'had had to educate his party.' What was the 'true inwardness' of his teaching? Did he himself hold, and did he endeavour to instil into them the belief, that the wholesale democratisation of the franchise was, despite all appearances, in reality a Conservative measure? Or did he merely strive to impress them with the necessity of practically recognising the force of the aphorism that 'needs must when the devil drives?' Did

he, in other words, persuade the party to accept household suffrage because he, too, was bent upon dishing the Whigs, and found that they could not be dished on any less exorbitant terms, or because he really held the Hyperborean theory so happily satirised by the Mr Lowe of that day—because he really believed in the existence of a zone of a warmer temperature 'at the back of the north wind,' and had genuinely convinced himself that by penetrating beneath the layer of Radicalism in the lower middle class, he would reach among the workmen a Conservative stratum of the population?

This, I am well aware, is the theory which finds favour with Conservatism of the Primrose League variety Nor do I doubt that it contains an element of truth It is easy to believe that an experiment in democratic legislation, which might seem hazardous enough to a statesman of inherited Conservative instincts and traditions, would have fewer terrors for the author of *Coningsby* and *Sybil* But it is one thing to admit that certain vague and romantic aspirations of youth may possibly have survived in the breast of a middle aged statesman, and quite another thing to believe that they had ripened *in that soil into settled and confirmed con* victions It may be true that Disraeli 'shot Niagara' with more of hope and less of fear than did his fellow voyagers, but that he went over the fall deliberately, and in the confident expectation of arriving safely at the bottom, and finding himself in quiet waters when he got there, is no better, in my humble judgment, than a pious legend I believe, and I think the whole course of his Parliamentary tactics shows, that he would not have shot Niagara at all if he could have gained his object in any other way, and I believe further that that object was substantially the same

for him as for his chief and his colleagues : that is to say, that his motive, like theirs, was compounded of the disinterested and patriotic anxiety to settle the question which was disturbing the peace of the country, and the, in a party sense, interested desire to prevent the honour and glory of effecting that settlement from falling into the hands of political adversaries. In what proportions these two motives were originally distributed, it would be hard to determine, and indeed of little profit to inquire; for it is unfortunately of the nature of the last-mentioned motive to play the part of Aaron's rod, in periods of vehement party contention, to every other ; and there is little doubt that as the battle grew fiercer, the restraints of prudence, and patriotism were swept away like dykes before a flood by the torrential desire for victory at any cost.

Rumours of dissension in the Cabinet had been rife during the autumn and winter of 1866. It was profoundly uncertain whether Ministers would be able to agree upon any scheme of Parliamentary Reform, and it was even doubted by some whether enough unanimity would be found among them to admit even of the attempt being made. Nevertheless, Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues met Parliament on February 5, 1867, with an unbroken front, and the Queen's Speech announced that 'attention would again be called to the state of the representation of the people in Parliament.' The paragraph containing this announcement was made to conclude with the expression of her Majesty's trust that the deliberations of Parliament 'conducted in a spirit of moderation and mutual forbearance, may lead to the adoption of measures which, without unduly disturbing the balance of political power, shall freely extend the electoral franchise.' This somewhat unusual reference to

'moderation and mutual forbearance' was soon to receive an authoritative interpretation What it meant, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced six days later, was that the Government proposed to attempt the settlement of the Reform question by a new process, and on the principle of 'co operation' instead of that of 'competition'

On February 11, Mr Disraeli thus interpreted it in an elaborate speech, in which he fully reviewed the history of Parliamentary Reform, and invited the House to restore the question to the position which, as he contended, it had originally occupied in that House, and from which it had only been displaced by the action of private members, notably of Lord John Russell in his intervals of private membership and official eclipse—the position, that is to say, not of a party question, but of a 'House of Commons question' In short, the meaning which Ministers attributed to the 'moderation and mutual forbearance' phrase in the Speech from the Throne was that 'under the circumstances in which the House found itself,' it was, in their opinion, 'expedient that Parliamentary Reform should no longer be a question which should decide the fate of Ministries

Excellent advice ! Nothing was wanting to its value but that it should have been given and followed five and thirty years before, and on half a dozen occasions since. Addressed as it was now by the leader of a party which had a few months before assisted to dislodge its opponents from power to the opponents whom it had dislodged—and nominally on the great question whether rating or rental should be the basis of the electoral franchise—it is not surprising that it should have been received with some laughter on the Opposition side of the House It struck the Liberals, no doubt, as a remarkable illustration of that yearning after the noble

ideal of a polity, where 'none were for a party, but all were for the State,' which is usually found to glow so much more warmly in the breasts of the 'Ins' than in those of the 'Outs.'

To assist Parliament to realise it, Mr. Disraeli proposed to proceed by way of resolution. Not that it was to be supposed, he was careful to add, that Ministers were asking the House to go into Committee, and allow them to propose resolutions, because they were '*angling for a policy.*' They were doing nothing of the kind. They had 'distinct principles which would guide them, and which they would ask the House to sanction. But'—for there must always be a 'but' when a Government, with distinct principles to guide them, do not see their way to embodying these principles after the more usual fashion in a Bill—they would, 'in the application of these principles, consult in every way the sense and accept the suggestions of the House. The course we adopt,' *continued Mr. Disraeli, with that engaging candour of his* in which there was always so piquant a difficulty of distinguishing between cynicism and *naïveté*, 'is not one flattering to ourselves; but it is more flattering to a statesman to assist, however humbly, in effecting that which he thinks is for the public good than to bring forward mock measures which he knows the spirit of party will not pass. And let me tell the Member for Birmingham, who gave me that ironical cheer, that there are others beside himself who think it desirable that this question should be settled, but who wish it to be settled in the spirit of the Constitution.'

The real 'flattery,' if we can suppose it to have been listened to, must have rather come from that tale told by Hope, which could induce an experienced Parliamentary tactician to believe that there was the slightest chance of his

being allowed to remove this question from the arena of party politics. Meanwhile, we need concern ourselves with only one of the 'distinct principles' by which Ministers had been guided in framing their resolutions. It is to be found in the passage in which Mr Disraeli deprecated any scheme of Reform which would change the historic character of the House of Commons. 'We do not find,' he said, 'that there is any security for its retaining that character, unless we oppose a policy which gives to any class in this country—I care not whether it be high or low, whether it be influenced by a democratical or an oligarchical feeling—a preponderant power in this House. And therefore, in any measures that we may bring forward, we shall assert that the elective franchise must be regarded as a popular privilege and not as a democratic right.' The events of the next three months were to furnish a truly remarkable commentary on this declaration.

The resolutions, thirteen in number, were soon in the hands of the House. As might from the first have been anticipated, their introduction failed to attain the object contemplated by their authors. Until they had been explained in debate, they were little more than vague affirmations of abstract political doctrine. Explanation, on the other hand, at once exposed them to criticism, as in some cases questionable, in others superfluous. The first, which recited that 'the number of electors for counties and boroughs in England and Wales ought to be increased,' was practically, of course, the affirmation of a truism. It was the recital, under another form of words, of the proposition that a reform of the representative system was desirable. Resolutions 2 and 3, which affirmed respectively that the increase should be effected by a reduction of the ex-

franchise, and 'the addition of other franchises not dependent on value,' and 'that no one class or interest could constitutionally be invested with a predominant power over the rest of the community,' were, in the absence of details as to the contemplated amount and character of the reduction and additions aforesaid, absolutely uninforming.

When these details were supplied, as they afterwards were by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the statement that the occupation franchise would be reduced to 6*l.* in boroughs, and that four new so-called 'fancy franchises' would be created alongside of it, there was obviously no longer any reason why his proposals should not be embodied in a Bill. The procedure by resolution was obnoxious, in short, to highly plausible objections; and we may further be quite certain that objections, whether plausible or not, would have been made. Neither the Reform party in the Opposition nor the section of that body who were by conviction opposed to Reform, had any notion of allowing the Government to shift any share of its responsibility on the House. 'Why,' asked Mr. Lowe, with that deadly directness of his, 'is it an irresistible reason, because Whigs and Tories have alike failed on this question, that the right honourable gentleman and his colleagues should enjoy absolute impunity? Why are they to have the mark of Cain set upon them that nobody may kill them?' The question would have come with better grace from one who had not taken so prominent a part as the querist in the murder of Abel in the previous year; but there was no answer to it.

At a meeting of the Opposition, held at Mr. Gladstone's house on February 26, it was agreed to meet the resolutions with an amendment, inviting the Government to withdraw them, and proceed by way of Bill. Upon this, Mr.

Disraeli gave way, and announced on the same evening in the House of Commons that the resolutions would be withdrawn, and a Bill introduced. Ten days afterwards, on March 4, the political world was agitated by the news that Lord Cranborne and two other members of the Cabinet, General Peel and Lord Carnarvon, had resigned.

The history of this catastrophe has been recorded with exceptional fulness, not only in official explanations tendered according to custom by the retiring Ministers in the two Houses, but in the quite unofficial, but by no means unamusing, narrative which was furnished by one of the colleagues whom they left behind them—Sir John Pakington. From this the public learnt that the Six pound Franchise Bill, foreshadowed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the speech explanatory of the resolutions on the night of February 25, was but one and the more moderate of two alternative schemes of Reform which had been under the consideration of the Cabinet. The other was a measure the suggestion of which is to be found in the fifth resolution, the only formula of all that phantom group which was destined to attain a position of even temporary importance, and which affirmed that 'the principle of plurality of vote, if adopted by Parliament, would facilitate the settlement of the borough franchise on an extensive basis.' In explaining this resolution to the House of Commons, Mr Disraeli contented himself with saying that the intention of the Government had been that any person who possessed one of the four new franchises which it was proposed to introduce—namely, the educational qualification, the 30*l* in a savings bank qualification, the 50*l* in the Funds qualification, and the 20*s* a year direct taxation qualification—should vote, not merely by his

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past four Mr Disraeli was to unfold the Reform scheme before the House of Commons Literally, they had not half an hour, they had not more than ten minutes to make up their minds as to what course the Ministry was to adopt The public know the rest. They determined to propose, not the Bill agreed to on the Saturday, but an alternative measure which they had contemplated in the event of their large and liberal scheme being rejected by the House of Commons'

On March 4, some time before these frank disclosures of Sir John Pakington (which were made by him on offering himself to his constituents for re election), Lord Cranborne, speaking after General Peel, had given his own account of matters from his place in Parliament Less animated and picturesque than that of the new Secretary for War, it substantially confirmed that agreeable narrative of the events which revolutionised the English polity Lord Cranborne had, he told the House, assented to the larger scheme of Reform on the faith of an understanding that the 'checks and balances supplied by the new franchises and the dual vote would adequately restrict its too excessive representation of mere numbers The operation, however, of these checks and balances had not been fully investigated and exhibited when the resolutions were laid on the table of the House' No exact statistics of the new borough electorate under household suffrage and of its numerical relation to the voters added by the new franchises had been prepared or was at any rate forthcoming, but when General Peel made his original objection to the larger scheme, and talked of resigning if it were adopted, 'it was in the hope,' said Lord Cranborne, 'that the figures might be so adjusted as to permit the desire of the great majority of my colleagues

franchise as occupier, but also 'for any one other of the new franchises which he might possess, and that Ministers believed that, if that principle were adopted, it might have led to results very satisfactory to large numbers of people in this country.' He added, however, 'that they were bound to state frankly that this was not a view of the case which, if they were permitted to bring in a Bill, they should at all insist upon. It was not desirable, it seemed to them, 'to make any proposition on these questions which they had not a fair prospect of carrying to a successful issue.'

No one could have guessed from this that the proposition they had been contemplating embodied a political change of no less magnitude than the introduction of household suffrage, subject to the 'check' of the dual vote, and still less that that proposition was but a few hours before on the point of being submitted to Parliament and had only at the last moment been abandoned. This, however, was the case. It was on Saturday, February 23, that the final, or what was supposed to be the final, scheme of the projected Reform Bill was settled in Cabinet Council. On the following Monday morning, however, Lords Cranborne and Carnarvon having come to the conclusion—in which they received the adhesion of General Peel, who had already previously tendered his resignation on the same ground—that the Bill was one which they could not support, informed Lord Derby of their wish to retire from the Cabinet. A Council was hastily summoned to consider the new situation; and to continue the story in the almost breathless words of good Sir John Pakington: 'Imagine the difficulty and embarrassment in which the Ministry found themselves placed. It was then past two o'clock; Lord Derby was to address the party at half-past two; at half-

measure but a few months after tripping up their adversaries in their attempt to carry a measure based upon a seven pound qualification, and even Conservatives so far felt the force of this criticism as to be ripe for surrender to that most immoral of all arguments, that one 'may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb' Doubtless one may, but though it is the same thing to the thief it is not so to the owner of the stolen property And the question which the followers of Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli should have asked themselves was not whether they would be as severely punished by the tongues of their adversaries for passing a six pound franchise Bill as for taking the plunge into household suffrage, but whether the consequences to the country would not be infinitely more serious in the one case than the other

This, however, seems unhappily to have been a neglected side of the question The party—meaning that considerable section which in every party under our political system puts victory first and principle afterwards—brought pressure to bear upon a Government who needed sadly little pressure, it is to be feared, to urge them onward, and the combined force of these influences determined the Prime Minister to submit to that rupture of the Cabinet against which he had been hitherto struggling, and to revert to the larger scheme The resignations were accordingly accepted, the Ministerial explanations were delivered in the two Houses, Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir John Pakington, and the Duke of Buckingham respectively succeeded to the offices vacated by Lord Cranborne, General Peel, and Lord Carnarvon A fortnight's interval was interposed in order to enable the appointment of the new Ministers to be ratified by their constituents, and on March 18 the Reform Bill was launched

too effective' for its purpose, as certain to be swept away. The dual vote could only operate in very large towns, and only there so as to affect a very few seats, while in all the middle sized and smaller boroughs the over whelming mass of voters brought in by household suffrage would rule unchecked.

Besides that, it was a proposal thoroughly unpalatable to the House of Commons. It would not pass, and would do no good. As to the personal payment of rates, that, he admitted, was a very important limitation, but what chance had they of sustaining it? What it meant was that in towns where the Small Tenements Act was in force, no one whose house was 'compounded' for would be allowed to vote *unless he paid, over the sum he had hitherto been* accustomed to pay the landlord, an advance of some 25 per cent. The result of that would be that in all those ninety eight out of our then total of two hundred boroughs in which the Small Tenements Act was in operation, 'you would find in one parish a "compound householder"[1] who would have to pay 5s a year for his vote, while in an adjoining parish a man of exactly the same social status living in a house of exactly the same size would enjoy his vote without any such payment. Was it likely that this galling and vexatious inequality would be long tolerated, or was

[1] The figure of the 'compound householder,' around whom raged so fierce a battle in 1867, has no doubt become rather dim to the present generation, and it may therefore be necessary to explain that this name was given to the occupiers of tenements, the landlords of which were permitted, under certain Acts of Parliament, to compound with the local authorities for the rates due from them as such occupiers. Hence, as one of the proposed 'checks' on household suffrage was that 'personal payment of rates should be a condition of the electoral qualification these 'compound householders,' a very large body, would *as such*, have been excluded from the franchise.

it not rather certain that the first use which the new electorate would make of the franchise would be to insist on their representatives sweeping it away? Thus,' continued Lord Cranborne, 'you will come to simple undiluted household suffrage, and without discussing the general arguments for or against democracy, I am content to fall back upon what seems to me a simple proposition of political morality, that the party which behaved in Opposition as ours did last year is not the party to propose household suffrage.'

This was plain speaking, but it was not more true as a proposition of morals than was this, which followed as an anticipation of events: 'We are told that the Conservative party as a body have so far advanced in principles and sentiments that they will accept this Bill. Well, if that is so, I think they will be committing political suicide. . . . I feel certain that if the Conservative party listens so much to party discipline, and listens so little to the dictates of those principles in which they have been accustomed to protest they believed, it will be their ruin politically, and that no preservative of party discipline, and no support of individual statesmen will compensate to them for that result.'

Those who, looking round the House of Commons to-day and seeing that the benches opposite to those occupied by the Liberals seem still pretty well filled, are disposed to sneer at this prophecy as falsified, must be simply in the unhappy—or is it happy?—case of those to whom words supply as much mental and moral sustenance as facts. There is indeed 'a Conservative party,' and the statesman who uttered the above prediction has lived to lead it; but no one knows better than its leader that its true name is not Conservative, but Opportunist, and that the one principle upon which true Conservatism in any

age and in any country must depend for its vitality disappeared finally from English politics in 1867

For what perished in that fateful year was not merely a particular set of opinions as to what measures will in this or that respect be beneficial or injurious to the State Such a loss as that would have been altogether a matter of minor importance Opinions change, and ought to change, in the natural course of human affairs, they must often, whether Liberal or Conservative, be, through the natural infirmities of the human mind, mistaken It was not the triumph of Liberal over Conservative doctrines at this crisis which really mattered, what really mattered was the concurrent abandonment of the principle—not a monopoly, it is fair to admit, of the Tory party—that the rule of wisdom, justice, and, in the highest sense of the word, of policy for a State, is not necessarily determined by the popular demands of the moment Sacrifices to this principle, regarded as the supreme dictator of political conduct, had been more than once submitted to by political parties in the course of our history Each had at times shown its willingness, in days when parties were better than their 'system,' and the hands of their leaders had not yet been thoroughly 'subdued to what they worked in,' to undergo long sentences of exclusion from office rather than surrender to popular movements which they deemed mistaken—each assuming that there was a 'better mind,' a saner judgment of the nation to which they might confidently appeal for a later approval of their action But now for the first time one English party competing with its rival had determined to hand over the constitution and destiny of the country as a gift to Numbers, thereby not merely trampling under foot for that occasion the principle which sets the conscience and

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would move the omission of the clause by which it was proposed to confer this privilege. It was dropped without a single protest, having never indeed had the good word of anyone from the first, unless, to be sure, we accept as such Lord Cranborne's benevolent but not enthusiastic reference to it as 'just and fair in principle, though an absolute futility in practice.' This disposed of, the struggle now centred on the question of the personal payment of rates. Had the original scheme of the Government been adhered to on this point, and had the leader of the House really treated this principle as 'vital' to his scheme, the enfranchising operation of the Reform Act of 1867 would beyond doubt have been greatly restricted, and the descent into downright Democracy correspondingly delayed, though for how long is a question of considerable uncertainty. But to abandon this principle was to take the plunge at once, and though it might have been impossible, as Lord Cranborne and others contended, to moor the boat for any length of time in the stream, it would have shown better faith and more conscientiousness to have made the attempt at any rate than it did to 'shoot Niagara' forthwith.

Nor has it ever been shown that the Government were on s point, at least, under any clear compulsion to give way. On others of the so-called 'compensations' for household suffrage, the duress under which they acted was conspicuous enough. The two years' residential qualification was cut down to one year by an adverse majority of eighty-one; and Ministers might reasonably have held themselves justified in bowing on this point to the decision of the House. But the attempt of the Opposition to break down the 'personal rating' restriction never at any time prospered like this. The Adullamites had no mind for helping Mr.

Gladstone to make the Bill more democratic than it was At the 'Tea Room Conference,' as one of the secessionist meetings was called, they succeeded in emasculating the instruction which Mr Coleridge was to have moved on going into Committee, and though the Government accepted that part of it which informed the Committee that they 'had power to alter the law of rating' they certainly never pledged themselves thereby to such an alteration as they afterwards made by the repeal of the Compounding Acts

Again, Mr Gladstone s amendment, proposing to enfranchise the occupier 'whether he in person or his landlord is rated to the relief of the poor,' though lost, it is true, by a *majority of only twenty one*, was still, *in fact, defeated*, and a Government with a 'vital principle' at stake should at least have paid so much respect to its vitality as to surrender it only upon actual rejection by the House The Adullamites were divided, but there was a section of them, headed by Lords Grosvenor and Elcho, which would have stood by the Government and seen them through But the agitation, hollow as it was, which was got up during the Easter recess, appears to have influenced their minds, and it is difficult to doubt that it sealed their determination not merely to carry the Bill, but to 'dish the Whigs' with it by showing an equal willingness to democratise the suffrage

Lord Cranborne spoke and voted in favour of Mr Gladstone s amendment That speech and vote were consistent enough with the convictions which he had avowed in the debate on the first reading He did not believe in the stability and resisting power of the barrier which 'personal rating' would set up, and he expressed special apprehension of the impetus likely to be given to corrupt canvassing by a provision which would encourage political organisations

to pay men's rates wholesale in order to get them on the register. In any case, however, and as a piece of legitimate Parliamentary tactics, Lord Cranborne would have been justified in supporting Mr. Gladstone with the same motive that induced men like Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman to vote with him—that, namely, of defeating the Bill. It is probable that even their late colleague had not yet taken the full measure of the pliability of Ministers, but imagined that if the House of Commons pronounced against their 'vital' principle of personal rating, the Government would feel bound to abandon their Bill and tender their resignations. He could hardly have foreseen that his late leader would volunteer to deprive the Bill of its 'vital principle' with his own hand.

But, on May 13, the Government assented to the principle of an amendment creating a lodger franchise, and, taxed by Sir Rainald Knightley with this derogation from the principle of the 'personal payment' of rates, the Chancellor of the Exchequer let fall these significant words: 'The hon. baronet is not for a moment, I suppose, prepared to contend that the payment of rates is the entire principle of the Bill.' Here a laugh followed, apparently from some honourable members who detected these preparations for a new retreat. 'Does any gentleman who laughs,' continued the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'pretend that it is the entire principle of the Bill? Is it the principle of the franchise which is founded on the possession of a sum in the savings-bank? Is it the principle of the franchise which is founded on the possession of a certain amount in the Funds? Is it the principle of the franchise which is founded on the payment of a certain amount of direct taxes?'

No, truly; it was not the principle of any of these franchises; but unfortunately, none of them were to escape

destruction themselves The check which was to be dispensed with because three other checks remained was finally abandoned on May 17, and when on the 28th, Sir Roundell Palmer moved to omit the clause by which these three other checks were to be established, Mr Disraeli concluded a speech of brief valediction to the group of surviving 'safeguards' with the observation that, as the morning sitting then in progress was drawing near its appointed hour of adjournment, and as the Government, by not passing the clause, would just have time to complete the first part of the Bill, they would accept Sir Roundell Palmer's motion 'without troubling the Committee to divide'!

Ministers, in other words, having thrown overboard one 'vital principle,' embodied in the compound householder, were now allowing these remaining principles to follow it without a struggle Between April 8 and May 28 all had gone dual vote, personal rating, two years' residential qualification, educational franchise, savings bank franchise, taxing franchise, fundholding franchise—all, and when the Report stage of the Bill was reached, Parliament stood face to face with that 'household suffrage pure and simple, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had vowed that the Government would 'never introduce'

It must have been a source of unfailing gratification to the present Prime Minister to reflect, amid all the vicissitudes of his subsequent political career, that he at least was not 'art or part' in this disastrous measure, that he bore testimony against it on every lawful occasion, that he sacrificed place and power, and what is harder to a statesman conscious of administrative ability, opportunities of public service, to the duty of resisting it, and that in unhesitating defiance of the reproaches of the political partisan, he

steadily opposed by speech and vote its passage through the House of Commons.

It was on July 15 that the motion for the third reading of the Bill was made, and that the member for Stamford found his last opportunity for liberating his soul. And thus he proceeded to review the history of the measure and of the successive transformations which it had undergone. When it passed its second reading it 'bristled with precautions, guarantees, and securities.' Now that the House had reached the third reading, all these precautions, guarantees, and securities had disappeared. It had been proposed by the member for Northamptonshire that beside the Bill as it now stood there should be printed a copy of the Bill as it was originally introduced. Lord Cranborne would have liked 'to see yet another document,' containing the demands made by the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire (Mr. Gladstone) on the occasion of the second reading of the Bill.

They were ten in number. First, he demanded the lodger franchise. Well, the lodger franchise has been given. Secondly, and this is the only doubtful one, provisions to prevent raffic in votes. Such provisions, however, are to be contained in another Bill, about the probable success of which I know nothing. My impression is that traffic in votes will be one of the results of this Bill. The right hon. gentleman next demanded the abolition of obnoxious distinctions between compounders and non-compounders. Not only have those obnoxious distinctions been abolished, but all distinctions whatever have disappeared. The fourth demand of the right hon. gentleman was that the taxing franchise should be omitted. It has been omitted. Fifthly, that the dual vote should be omitted. It has been omitted. Sixthly, that the redistribution of seats must be considerably enlarged. It has been enlarged full fifty per cent. Seventhly, that the county franchise must be reduced. It has

been reduced to something like that point at which it stood in the proposal of last year Eighthly, that the voting papers must be omitted. To my extreme regret the voting papers have been omitted. The last two demands were that the educational and savings bank franchises should be omitted——

Here some uneasy conscience on the Ministerial benches attempted to relieve itself with a cry of 'Question !'

Why what, sir, is the question but this? Remember that the history of this Bill is quite peculiar I venture to say that there is no man in this House of Commons who can remember any Bill being treated in the way that this Bill has been dealt with. No man in the House can remember a Government who have introduced a Bill of this importance, and who have yielded in Committee amendments so vitally altering the whole constitution and principle of the Bill as has been done in the present instance I venture to impress this upon the House because I have heard it said that this Bill is a Conservative triumph If it is a Conservative triumph to have adopted the principles of your most determined adversary, if it is a Conservative triumph to have introduced a Bill guarded with precautions and securities, and to have abandoned every one of those precautions and securities at the bidding of your opponents, then in the whole course of your annals I will venture to say the Conservative party has won no triumph so signal as this

The 'signal triumph' was not yet quite won, but it was drawing very near its consummation On July 16 the Bill was sent up to the House of Lords and was read a second time on the 23rd of that month It was some five or six days in passing through Committee, and returned at the expiration of that time to the Lower House with a series of amendments, among which only one of any importance—that introducing the principle of the 'three cornered constituency' in certain boroughs and counties, and in the City of London—was agreed to by the Commons The medi

fications introduced by the Lords into the clauses relating to the lodger and to the county occupation franchises were, on division, disagreed with, as also was the new clause, inserted on the motion of Lord Salisbury, in restoration of the original proposal of the Bill to allow votes to be taken by means of voting papers. Thus, therefore, this momentous measure of legislation, to which the Royal Assent was given on August 15, took its place in the statute book in substantially the same form as that in which it left the House of Commons.

CHAPTER VI

Relations of Lord Cranborne with Mr Disraeli—The Irish Church resolutions—His attitude with regard to them—Becomes Marquis of Salisbury—The Suspensory Bill—In the Lords—Lord Salisbury's speech—Rejection of the Bill—Dissolution and new Parliament.

DIFFERENCES between public men are always apt to be exaggerated by the observer from without Yet the breach which had been created between Lord Cranborne and his chief by the events of 1867 might well seem serious, even to experienced politicians It is likely, indeed, that smaller men would have been permanently estranged A statesman of a different temperament from that of Mr Disraeli might have cherished a grudge against the colleague by whose retirement at a critical juncture his position had been seriously endangered, and who afterwards had not hesitated to oppose him again and again by speech and vote on more than one question, which, if carried against him, would have been fatal to his Government On the other hand, there are men who in Lord Cranborne's position would have bitterly resented the sudden arrest of an official career of high success and still higher promise, by the uninvited duty of resisting a measure which ought never to have been introduced. But the retired Minister was animated by the patriotism that merges private in public considerations, his chief had the politic magnanimity of the thorough man of the world, and both enjoyed the inestimable advantage

of being opposed by a politician whose influence in undesignedly healing feuds among his political adversaries has so often earned him the benediction pronounced upon the peacemakers.

Mr. Gladstone, ere many months had elapsed, established a fresh claim to inclusion among the blessed of the Ninth Beatitude by announcing a departure in policy which was sure to reunite the Conservatives of all schools in opposition to him. In consultation with his friends during the Parliamentary recess of 1867, he discovered the existence of a 'upas-tree' in Ireland, of which one of the stems was represented by the Established Church in that country. Accordingly, almost immediately after the reassembling of Parliament in 1868, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his intention to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee 'for the purpose of considering the condition of the Established Church in Ireland,' and on March 30, this motion was brought forward. It was, of course, opposed alike by Ministers and their late colleagues, but it did not in the first instance effect a complete reunion between them. The Government met Mr. Gladstone's proposition by an amendment protesting against any prejudgment of the question in an expiring Parliament elected under an extinct representative system. Lord Cranborne held that the Conservative party ought to pronounce clearly and emphatically against the object of the motion, and in favour of the principle of a Protestant Church establishment in Ireland.

Nor can it be denied, in the light of subsequent events, that the bolder mode of meeting Mr. Gladstone's motion might well have been the wiser even from a tactical point of view. That the Parliament of 1867 was absolutely without authority to pronounce condemnation on the Irish

Church is no doubt technically true enough Of such jurisdiction as it might have possessed over the question it had deliberately divested itself, and upon no possible theory of the constitution could its pronouncement carry any constitutional weight whatever But undoubted as these truths are, they are of the truths that profit little The utterances of six hundred and fifty—however elected—representatives of a people do not lose all the moral authority which would otherwise have belonged to them simply because the composition of the electorate has been changed By none save those who adopt the very lowest and most mechanical view of the representative function could any such contention be possibly maintained, for its maintenance must, to all save these, involve the further assumption, notoriously at variance with the facts, that a reform of the electoral system entails an entire, or at least a considerable change in the *personnel* of the elected Apart, however, from all question as to individual prospects of re election, the Parliament of 1867, and any political party contained in it, still collectively possessed, and could not, indeed, divest itself of, its moral right and duty—as a body or a portion of a body chosen for its assumed fitness for that purpose—to advise the country on any political question arising during its term of service The Conservatives in this Parliament would have lost nothing at the then approaching election by frankly declaring themselves against disestablishment

What they lost by the opposite course it is easy to see They took the first step in deliberate abnegation of that duty by the faithful and energetic discharge of which they could alone hope to atone for the democratisation of the suffrage—the duty of leading, or at least endeavouring to lead, the unskilled multitudes whom they had enfranchised

They set the first example of inviting the people to issue their 'mandate' to their delegates. They made the first public recognition of the new doctrine that right and wrong should be what the constituencies upon consultation shall declare them to be; that the path of duty lies only and always in the direction in which 'the cat jumps'; that the sole canon of justice is the 'length of the foot' of Demos.

Or, if we prefer, we may call it the second lesson in Opportunism, the passing of the Reform Bill being itself the first. It was an attempt to 'stand in' with the new electorate, in case they should desire the overthrow of the Irish Church. It was conceived in the same spirit as the great 'Whig-dishing' enterprise of the year before, and was, indeed, inspired largely by apprehension lest the 'dishers' should do something to offend the prejudices of their newly-created masters before the profits of the 'dishing' operation had been reaped. Their solicitude, as we know, was thrown away, and it is difficult to imagine that any display of courage in speaking out their real minds to the new electorate on this or any other subject could have earned them a more crushing rebuff than they actually received.

Lord Cranborne approached the motion in no such temporising spirit. All that is most truly and deeply Conservative in his mind and temperament has ever been called into activity by questions of this kind. The fibre of attachment to the principle of an Established Church goes down to the very root of those convictions from which his secular politics spring. He could not, as he told Mr. Gladstone in the course of this debate, confess, like that distinguished person, to the experience of having escaped 'from the spell of the sentiment in favour of an Established Church.' 'That sentiment,' he frankly admitted—and the simple candour of

the avowal seems to carry us back much more than three and twenty years from the age of Parliamentary cynicism in which we now live—'still exercises a hold over me which I regard as sacred' So strong was it that Lord Cranborne owned his inability to emancipate himself from it, even in a case in which, as he candidly acknowledged, the principle of an Established Church was put to a very severe test, and its defenders had to rely more upon abstract and *à priori* argument and less upon appeals to expediency than could have been wished 'Even as applied to Ireland,' said he, 'it is a principle which I will not desert, it is a principle which has done so much good in past times, it is a principle from which we may hope so much hereafter that even if I were inclined to doubt of its soundness, it would not be in this moment of its trial and adversity that I should shrink from upholding it'

In this interesting and courageous speech, Lord Cranborne was unconsciously taking leave of the House of Commons Mr Gladstone's resolution was carried by a majority of fifty six on April 3 and Parliament immediately afterwards adjourned for the Easter recess On April 12, the second Marquis of Salisbury died, and on May 7 his son took his seat in the House of Lords

Not every debater of eminence in the Lower House finds acceptance among the more fastidious audience on the other side of the Central Hall, but Lord Salisbury's oratory had always combined the pungency and animation which win favour in one House with the power of argument and dignity of utterance which are the qualities chiefly prized in the other Almost immediately upon his entrance into the Upper Chamber, he stepped into his natural place as one of the leaders of its debates, and only a week after he took his

seat he delivered a short but pregnant speech upon a proposal to give legislative effect to some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Ritual, which had then just presented its Report. The warning which he addressed to Lord Shaftesbury on that occasion, as to the danger of hasty and partisan legislation against ritual, and the strife which it would stir up in the Church, was destined a few years after to be amply confirmed. The future opponent of the Public Worship Regulation Act was vainly admonishing the most active of its future sponsors.

A question, however, of more immediate urgency was soon to engage the attention of the House of Lords and its new member. Having carried his Irish Church resolutions through the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone had thereupon brought in a Bill to suspend appointments to all vacant ecclesiastical offices in the Church of Ireland. The propriety of this measure could no doubt be defended—by Mr. Gladstone; and by him possibly with an inexhaustible wealth of argument. But to less gifted persons it still presents itself in the light of a fresh step in advance along that path of usurpation upon which the majority of the House of Commons had been prevailed upon to enter. For if it was constitutionally speaking, *ultra vires* of the unreformed Parliament to pronounce judgment on the Irish Church, it was going still further beyond those powers to assume that this judgment would be ratified by the new constituencies. Yet nothing less than that assumption was implied in the attempt to arrest the usual course of appointment to ecclesiastical offices. If it was desired to avoid the appearance of prejudging the electoral question, the *status quo* should have been studiously maintained; and it was clearly part of the *status quo* that vacancies should be filled up as

they occurred Obviously, however, the intention was to force the hand of the new Parliament, and indirectly to commit the House of Lords to a recognition of the right of an unreformed House of Commons to condemn the existence of the Established Church of Ireland

The Bill, carried by large majorities through the Lower House, came on for second reading in the House of Lords on June 25, and on the second night of the adjourned debate its purpose was exposed and denounced in a speech of much force and eloquence by Lord Salisbury He pointed out that the promoters of the measure which thus affected, but only affected, to reserve the question for the decision of the new electorate, were themselves irrevocably pledged to the disendowment and disestablishment of the Irish Church, and he insisted on the truth that there is no essential distinction between private and so called 'public' property, or between the plunder of a corporation and the robbery of an individual Though there might, he admitted, be reason for reforming the Irish Church, the only argument for disendowing it was that a certain number of persons envied it the possession of its property, and he contended that to yield to an attack so inspired would be to endanger the tenure of all kinds of property whatever As to the application of the 'test of numbers' to the question of maintaining the Irish Church, he protested, and with true prescience, against the admission of an argument which would be equally available for employment, and has, as we all know, been since employed, to justify the disestablishment of the Church in Wales. But it was later on in this remarkable speech that Lord Salisbury gave the most striking proof of statesmanlike quality in the penetration which enabled him to pierce to the heart of the Irish trouble

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Your proposal (he said) seems to be to still the waters of this agitating time by offering up a victim to the avenging deities; but are you quite sure that the avenging deities will accept your offering? I have heard many elaborate attempts to prove that Fenianism is the true necessity that has caused this movement. But is it not an extraordinary phenomenon that, for the first time in the history of rebellion, we have rebels who do not know the cause of their rebellion? This is an age of rebellion: we have seen them in all countries; but I have never before heard of one where rebels were at a loss to state the grievances they desired to see removed. You tell us that though the Fenians never raised a cry against the Established Church, it is the Established Church which is really at the bottom of their agitation. It is impossible to conceal from ourselves that something very different is at the bottom of the Fenian movement; and I suspect that when the Irish people hear that many Liberal landlords have joined in the attack on the Irish Church, they will say the reason is that they think they will save themselves by making the parson their Jonah, and throwing him overboard. My lords, it is against the land and not against the Church that the Fenian agitation is really directed. You offer them what they do not ask for; you offer them that which will not pacify them. Talk of the monuments of conquest: the landlord is a much more complete monument of conquest than the clergyman. The clergyman does not hurt the peasant; if the clergyman be taken away the peasant would be no richer but rather poorer; but the landlord holds the property which the peasant in his traditions will remember once to have belonged to his sept. If you seek to appease the danger by mere concession; if you yield to the mere demands of anger, or to use the euphemistic language we have heard, if Fenian outrages are to make you reason calmly and dispassionately—it is to the landlord and not to the clergyman that you should really turn your attention.

To us of to-day these observations read, no doubt, like truisms, but that is because we read them by the light of nearly a quarter of a century's subsequent experience. Those

who can recall the talk of the doctrinaire Liberalism of 1868–74, will well remember the stress which was laid upon the 'healing' effect of the policy of disestablishment. It was not, indeed, denied that land legislation would also be necessary, but undoubtedly, at that date, the message of peace which was finally despatched to Ireland in 1869 was represented as likely to be quite as important and far reaching in its pacificatory effects as the boon which was to be given the tenant in the following year.

It was not enough, however, to expose the fatuity of this expectation. Lord Salisbury had still to deal with the invariable argument—if overbearing bluster can be so described—which is called out for service on these occasions. He had still to answer those who contended that because the House of Commons had voted in favour of a certain course of policy it was the duty of the House of Lords to bow to it forthwith. Lord Salisbury's answer was an amplification of the views expressed by him in the controversy with Mr Gladstone on the question of the repeal of the paper duties. Lord Clarendon, as became a conscientious, not to say a superstitious, Whig, had contended that it was the duty of the Peers to 'pay greater attention to the majorities of the other House of Parliament,' a process which, with eminently Whiggish confidence, he appears to have regarded as necessarily identical with 'watching public opinion more closely.' To Lord Salisbury it occurred to ask his noble friend 'whether he had considered for what purpose the House exists, and whether he would be willing to go through the humiliation of being a mere echo and supple tool of the other House in order to secure for himself the luxury of mock legislation.' And he went on to lay down what is undoubtedly the sound constitutional principle of action to be

observed by the House of Lords in all its dealings with the other branch of the Legislature—the principle which he has himself invariably upheld, both in its injunctions and its prohibitions, both on its positive and its negative side, throughout his political life, and his staunch fidelity to which has enabled him to hold steadily on his course between the Opportunist and the Impracticable, during the three-and-twenty years which have passed since the government of the country was handed over to Numbers.

When the opinion of your countrymen has declared itself, and you see that their convictions—their firm, deliberate, sustained convictions—are in favour of any course, I do not for a moment deny that it is your duty to yield. It may not be a pleasant process; it may even make some of you wish that some other arrangement were existing; but it is quite clear that whereas a member of a Government, when asked to do that which is contrary to his convictions, may resign, and a member of the House of Commons when asked to support any measure contrary to his convictions may abandon his seat, no such course is open to your lordships; and therefore in those rare and great occasions on which the national mind has fully declared itself I do not doubt your lordships would yield to the opinion of the country, otherwise the machinery of government could not be carried on. But there is an enormous step between that and being the mere echo of the House of Commons.

And he added, in words well calculated to appeal to the pride of an historic assembly:

I have no fear of the conduct of the House of Lords in this respect. I am quite sure, whatever judgment may be passed on us, whatever predictions may be made, be your term of existence long or short, you will never consent to act except as a free, independent House of the Legislature, and that you will consider any other more timid or subservient course as at once unworthy of your traditions, unworthy of your honour, and most of all, unworthy of the nation you serve.

The Suspensory Bill was deservedly rejected by the Lords, and nothing more remained but to wind up the business of the session and prepare for the appeal to the new constituencies. Parliament was prorogued on July 31, and dissolved on November 11 'Derby told his friends,' Lord Shaftesbury had written in a letter of March 1867, 'that if they passed his Bill they would be in office many years' The Conservatives were now to test the value of his promises They went to the vast multitudes whom, by an unparalleled act of tergiversation, they had converted into electors, and asked for their reward, and the new electors replied to them by sending back their opponents to Parliament in a majority of over a hundred The losers were aghast at the alleged ingratitude of the constituencies, the winners delighted with their assumed intelligence Inexperienced as they were, said the latter, they had already proved that they could distinguish between the real and the pretended authors of their enfranchisement. Others were of opinion that the electors were thinking less of services past than of favours to come It matters not which was right One thing was certain, that the gigantic adventure of the Conservatives in legislative bribery had ended in electoral disaster

And so may it ever be!

CHAPTER VII

Irish Church Disestablishment Bill—Lord Salisbury accepts and assists to pass it with amendments—Negotiates compromise—Parliamentary Procedure and Life Peerage Bills—Elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford—Irish Land Act of 1870—Lord Salisbury on 'the Oracle'—Army Purchase Bill and Royal Warrant—Increasing unpopularity of the Government—Collier and Ewelme Rectory Scandals—Defeat of the Irish University Bill—Dissolution and Conservative victory at the polls—Mr. Gladstone resigns.

LORD SALISBURY was now to be called upon to prove the loyalty and sincerity of his adherence to those principles of action which, in the debate on the Suspensory Bill, he had pressed upon the House of Lords. He had admitted that 'whenever the opinion of their countrymen had declared itself, and they saw that their convictions—their firm, deliberate, sustained convictions—were in favour of any course, it was the duty of that House to yield.' Whether the verdict against the Irish Church Establishment which Mr. Gladstone succeeded in 'rushing' through the masses of newly enfranchised electors, many of whom had probably never heard of the question before, could be accurately described as the expression of 'a firm, deliberate, sustained conviction,' may well be do[illegible] t Lord Salisbury had too much moderation an[illegible] om to cavil at it on this score. He had realised [illegible] the dark' meant, and was more resigned t[illegible] than [illegible] ose who had taken it wit[illegible] He [illegible] pro-

nouncement of the constituencies against the Irish Church was as 'deliberate' a decision as we were likely to get, at any rate for many years to come, from the new democracy, and he accepted it accordingly A recently published biography of Archbishop Tait has shown the admirable spirit in which, when Mr Gladstone's Irish Church Act reached the Upper House, Lord Salisbury exerted himself to overcome the objections of its more vehement opponents in the Peers, and to avert the grave constitutional crisis to which its rejection would have given rise

The session of 1869 was mainly occupied, of course, in the 'heroic' measure of disestablishment, but spasmodic attempts were made, with the abortive results invariable in sessions dedicated to heroic measures, to pass useful measures of legislation With one such measure Lord Salisbury's name was connected as originator and promoter, and to another, of more doubtful policy perhaps, he gave his active support Their fate may be shortly indicated by observing that the propriety of the changes proposed by them has been again discussed within the last two years

The former measure, introduced in March 1869, was directed to the repeal of that rule of Parliamentary procedure which requires that Bills should pass through both Houses of the Legislature in the same session in order to become law Assuming that legislation is a desirable end in itself—which few people ever have the courage to deny, and the absolute denial of which might possibly be too sweeping a proposition—it is difficult to defend the existence of this rule Even a partial justification of it is possible only to those who hold—again a proposition beyond the sustainment of any but the exceptionally courageous—that the mischievous Bills introduced in any given session so

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much outnumber the salutary or merely harmless ones that the gain of arresting the former outweighs the loss incurred by interposing obstacles to the latter.

By Lord Salisbury's Parliamentary Proceedings Bill, introduced during this session, it was proposed to enact that any measure which had passed one House might, subject to the assent of the Crown and the two Houses to such procedure, be considered by the other House in the ensuing session. By this means Parliament would have been enabled not only to avoid the enforced extinction of measures which it desired to pass, but to obviate the necessity of hurriedly and inadequately considering their provisions at the fag-end of the session, to the discomfort and indignation of the judges who have subsequently to interpret them, and sometimes to the serious loss and injury of the Queen's lieges. Lord Salisbury's Bill was read a second time in the House of Lords and referred to a joint committee of the two Houses. Ministers, however, declined to bestow their patronage upon it; and as in that pre-Parnellite period, Governments with substantial majorities behind them knew not what it was to be compelled to drop Ministerial measures, over which weeks of public time had been spent, at the end of a session, its urgency was naturally not very apparent to the official mind. Yet it seemed, and seems still to most of us, a safe and salutary reform enough in its way, and one cannot help feeling some surprise that after the experience of Administrations of both parties during the last fifteen years, there should still be apparently so general a reluctance on the part of what are called, apparently by way of distinction, 'responsible politicians'—though it is to be hoped that all, even the most mischievous or most tedious, members of Parliament will have to answer some-

where, either here or hereafter, for their political conduct—to take up the proposal seriously and procure its adoption

The other measure which Lord Salisbury endeavoured, in this case only as supporter, to promote during the present session was Lord Russell's Life Peerage Bill Of the principle of this Bill, which aimed at supplying the House of Lords with 'new blood'—that very old desideratum in the minds of many reformers—by the creation of life peers, subject to certain stringent rules as to the maximum number who might be created in the same year or sit at the same time, he heartily approved He contended that the chief deficiency in the House of Lords was a want of representatives of the mercantile and industrial interests, who would bring their practical knowledge and experience to bear on *many subjects which came before the Lords, especially such* as related to the health and moral condition of the people And to this contention, which is at least practical in spirit, if the policy advocated in it be not easily practicable in fact, he added another of a more abstract, and it must be said also, of a more questionable kind 'We must try,' he declared, 'to impress on the country the fact that because we are not an elective House, we are not a bit the less a representative House, and not until the constitution of the House plainly reveals that fact shall we be able to retain permanently in face of the advance of the House of Commons, the *ancient privileges and constitution of this House*'

It was hardly with such energy of language that the Lord Salisbury of 1889 recommended to the House of Lords the Bill for the creation of life peerages which he introduced in that year In the interval of twenty years which has elapsed between these two essays in legislation he has no doubt learnt two things first, that no attempt to emphasise

much outnumber the salutary or merely harmless ones that the gain of arresting the former outweighs the loss incurred by interposing obstacles to the latter.

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The history of the years 1869 and 1870 was destined to afford a fresh proof of the vanity of attempting to bribe the agents and instruments of Irish disorder into tranquillity by the bestowal of so called legislative 'boons' on an entirely different class of people The disestablishment of the Church in the former year produced no improvement in the state of Ireland Crime and outrage abounded during the winter, and early in the following year Ministers were compelled to introduce a stringent Peace Preservation Bill for the re establishment of something like law and order in the distracted country It was a melancholy confirmation of Lord Salisbury's predictions in the debate on the Irish Church Suspensory Bill of 1868 The supporters of that measure had urged the constituencies to overthrow an institution of which no one complained, in order to quiet a number of people who were loudly denouncing an institution which they had not yet succeeded in shaking The inevitable result had followed, and the opportunity seemed favourable for reminding the men who had now assumed the responsibilities of government that whereas in this country we are 'content and have long been content to guide, in Ireland it is essential that we should govern Until,' said Lord Salisbury, 'you have learnt that, until you have established it deeply in the minds of the Irish people, you will not get them to listen to your views and arguments, nor will you gain the full result of those remedial measures which, as far as they are just, I heartily approve of'

Another of these 'remedial measures,' perhaps not going beyond what was at the moment just, but destined to open the way for subsequent legislation of the greatest injustice and the worst possible example was to be introduced the same year The Irish Land Act was accepted by the

the necessity of compromise on many political questions in which, under the old franchise, he would doubtless have counselled the Peers to resistance; while at the same time he was careful never to yield up a single stronghold to the mere bouncing demonstrations of its assailants.

Thus the attempt to force the Army Organisation Bill through Parliament in the shape of a simple measure for the abolition of purchase was one which he held it legitimate to resist, if only on grounds of legislative propriety and of due respect to a legislative body; and when Mr. Gladstone's imperious temper led him to reply to the rejection of the measure in the Lords by procuring the issue of a Royal Warrant giving effect to the proposed changes, Lord Salisbury was one of the most energetic supporters of the vote of censure upon the Government which was moved and carried in the Upper House by way of protest against so high-handed an appeal to the prerogative. In like manner he was to be found among those Peers who resented and foiled the endeavour to 'rush' the Ballot Bill through the Upper House in the month of August. Nor did he shrink from facing the storm of Radical abuse which he knew would be showered on the Peers for insisting, even at the cost of a year's delay, on having due time allowed them to discuss a measure which had been nearly half a century before the House of Commons, and had been rejected by that branch of the Legislature no fewer than twenty-eight times.

Meanwhile, save for these occasional assertions of principle, there was really little or nothing for an Opposition to do except, for the reason of the well-known adage, to give the Government 'plenty of rope.' From the first it had been a Ministry of 'all the talents' save those of tact and

discretion, two or three of its most conspicuous members had applied themselves as industriously to making enemies for the Administration ever since their appointment as some men do to the work of making private friends, and by the end of the session it was fast filling up the measure of its unpopularity The defiant insolence with which Russia had been allowed to tear up the Black Sea Treaty in the face of its signatories, and the transparent pretence of Lord Granville's attempt to give an air of firmness to his surrender, had disgusted even peace loving Englishmen

Ministers had fallen generally into disfavour before the rising of Parliament in the autumn of 1871, and the events of the recess that followed brought them into contempt as well Two unlucky, and so far as one can judge, gratuitously devised and wantonly perpetrated jobs—the appointment of Sir Robert Collier, by an evasion of the terms of a statute, to a seat on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and the presentation of Mr Harvey, by a strictly analogous process, to the living of Ewelme—gave just offence to public opinion and were vigorously attacked in both Houses of Parliament The Government escaped a vote of censure but they emerged from the conflict, not only with increased discredit in popular estimation, but sensibly weakened in their hold over their followers

The hours, in fact, were fast 'engendering of the day' of Mr Gladstone's downfall, and few probably of those who had correctly measured the difficulties of the task which he set himself in the following year, and the disadvantages of shaken prestige and authority under which he approached it, can have been surprised at his defeat over the Irish *University Bill in 1873 This event was of course followed* by the resignation of the Government and a summons from

the Crown to the leader of the Opposition, who, however, legitimately and wisely declined the task of attempting to conduct the affairs of the country, with a minority behind him, in an exhausted Parliament. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues resumed office on the tacit understanding that public business should be wound up as expeditiously as might be, and that the appeal to the constituencies should then be made.

Another ten months were, however, to elapse before the dissolution. One morning in the month of January 1874 there appeared a lengthy manifesto from the Prime Minister, stating briefly the reason for having advised her Majesty to dissolve Parliament, and setting forth with considerably greater fulness an array of reasons why the electorate should renew his lease of power. In spite, however, of the many words in which they were clothed, they were substantially only three in number, and consisted first of a bribe to the direct taxpayer, secondly of a bribe to the indirect taxpayer, and thirdly of a bribe to the local ratepayer. Mr. Gladstone anticipated a surplus of over five millions, and with this he promised that he would remit the income tax, 'free the breakfast table,' and largely reduce the burden of local taxation. It was far and away the biggest money bribe ever offered by a political party in the State to the constituencies; and it was the most decisively rejected. Mr. Gladstone went to the country with his hands full of gifts, and the country responded with a blow which laid him prostrate. The boldest bid ever made for success at a general election earned only the most crushing defeat that has overtaken any Minister of modern times. It was three-and-thirty years since the country had pronounced so decisively against any Liberal Government and so over-

whelmingly in favour of their opponents Never since 1841 had the Conservatives returned from the polls with a working majority, and their majority in 1874 was much more than a working majority it was a commanding one Ministers did not remain in office to meet its condemnation, but resigned as soon as the result of the election had declared itself

CHAPTER VIII

The New Government—Again Secretary for India—The Bengal Famine—Lord Northbrook and Sir George Campbell—The Public Worship Regulation Bill—Opposed by Lord Salisbury in the Lords—Mr. Gladstone's Six Resolutions—The Prime Minister adopts the Bill—Sadducees and phylacteries—The Bill returned to the Lords—Lord Salisbury rebukes 'bluster'—The Prime Minister on his colleague—A '*master of flouts and jeers*'—Sessions of 1875 and 1876.

RUMOUR was, of course, busy during the few days immediately succeeding the resignation of the Government with the imaginary difficulties which were being encountered by Mr. Disraeli in the attempt to carry out the Royal commands to form a new Administration. Six months before, when Mr. Gladstone's defeat on the Irish Education Bill had compelled him to place his resignation in her Majesty's hands, political gossips had been in a position to inform the world that it was Lord Derby, and not Mr. Disraeli, who would become his successor. Under the latter statesman, so these omniscient persons declared of their own knowledge, Lords Salisbury and Carnarvon would inflexibly refuse to serve; and as no worthy Conservative Cabinet could be formed without them, a compromise would have to be arranged by Mr. Disraeli's waiving his claims to the Premiership in favour of Lord Derby. As the Leader of the Opposition prayed to be excused from obedience to her Majesty's commands on that occasion, these political *gobe-mouches* were never exposed, and their

information' was now, of course, reproduced for a brief currency of some twenty four hours By the afternoon of the day following the summons of Mr Disraeli to Windsor, he had already filled the principal places in his Cabinet, and it was officially known that Lord Salisbury would return to his old post at the India Office, and Lord Carnarvon again resume his administration of the Colonies

The moment was a critical one for the former of the two new Ministers, for before the end of the previous year it had become clear that a great famine was impending in India, and, to add to the difficulties of the Secretary of State, a grave difference of opinion on a vital point in the question as to the proper measures to be adopted for dealing with the calamity had already arisen between the Viceroy of India and the highest of the local administrators responsible to him The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir George Campbell, whose name and opinion carried weight in those days, urged that the exportation of grain from India should be absolutely prohibited as long as the scarcity in Bengal lasted, and that the rice, which in ordinary circumstances would have found its way to European merchants, should be sent into the famine stricken districts Lord Northbrook, on the other hand, insisted that the export trade should continue as before, and that the Government should import rice into Bengal Sir G Campbell's plan he regarded as a dangerous interference with the freedom of trade, and as certain to injure, if not permanently to cripple, the grain trade of India. One need hardly say which of these two views would be the more likely to find favour with public sentiment, uninformed by economic insight, in this country, or to commend itself in consequence to a timid or popularity hunting Minister

As a matter of fact, much pressure was put upon Lord Salisbury by the supporters of Sir George Campbell's contention, and it needed no little firmness on the part of the Secretary for India to stand stoutly by the sounder policy of the Viceroy. In his speech in its defence in the House of Lords—a speech which concluded with a generous tribute to the ability with which Lord Northbrook, a political opponent, had met the crisis—Lord Salisbury convincingly showed that, while from the financial point of view the difference between the two alternative courses was scarcely worth considering, from the administrative point of view it was all-important. The export of grain would not imperil the supply for the distressed districts because there was a large surplus crop in some parts of Bengal, and the difficulty had been, not to procure grain, but to bring the supplies to the homes of the starving population. On the other hand, an official prohibition of exports would have paralysed private trade, and, by causing private traders to abandon the idea of attempting the conveyance of grain on their own account to these parts of the country, would have tended to aggravate a real famine by an artificial one. The wise and courageous course thus adopted by the Secretary for India was crowned with complete success. The mpending scarcity turned out, to the full as serious as those best acquainted with the country had expected; but the preparations for dealing with it proved thoroughly effective, and the dreaded visitation passed off without even so much as causing any increase in the death-rate of Bengal.

As regards domestic affairs, the session of 1874 bade fair at first to be of an absolutely uneventful character. A year which begins with a dissolution, followed by a com-

plete turn of the political tables and the elevation of a weak Opposition to power at the head of an overwhelming majority is not usually marked by any other very important or exciting political incidents. After such a somersault, parties naturally require some little time to recover their breath, and they usually spend the session that follows in awaiting the gradual subsidence of the rate of respiration to a normal point. Nor is there any reason to suppose that when the new Parliament of 1874 adjourned on the night of March 19, after listening to the Speech from the Throne, there was expectation in any quarter, Ministerial or other, of a departure from this precedent. The Government set before the House a very modest bill of legislative fare. An amendment of the system of Land Transfer, a Royal Commission on the Law of Master and Servant, of Conspiracy, and of Trade Offences, an extension of the Judicature Reform to Ireland, and a Friendly Societies Bill—of these and other like measures did the programme consist.

No one suspected that the session would be rendered, one cannot exactly say memorable, but certainly remarkable, by a piece of legislative work at once so irritating and so impotent as to send us back nearly a quarter of a century for its parallel, and one attended by passages of Parliamentary history so curious that we have to extend our retrospect for yet another hundred years and more to find their precedents. A measure as gratuitously introduced—or at least, as needlessly adopted by the Government—as noisily and intemperately supported, and almost as void of result as the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, was passed through the House of Commons in a series of debates which seem to transport us to the days when Ministers, sitting side by side on the Treasury Bench, were in the habit of rising to denounce

each other's policy to an assembly to whom such an incident appeared the most natural thing in the world.

Yet nobody anticipated either the Ministerial patronage of the measure, or the strange accompaniments of its passage, when, on April 20, the Archbishop of Canterbury introduced the Public Worship Regulation Bill. One may perhaps, without much rashness, venture a little further and say that even when that measure had been read a third time in the Upper, and sent down to the Lower, House the anticipation of such a future for it had not yet dawned. For it is no very hazardous assumption that if Mr. Gladstone had not attacked it—or even if he had only attacked it on principles which were a less direct challenge to the 'Protestantism of the Protestant religion'—Mr. Disraeli would never have stood forth as its uncompromising champion, still less have identified his Government with its Parliamentary fortunes, least of all espoused its cause in language which gave such deep offence to a large body of Conservative Churchmen.

In the House of Lords a division of Ministerial opinion with regard to the merits of the Bill had already disclosed itself. The Duke of Richmond had supported it, and the Chancellor had joined Lord Shaftesbury and the two Archbishops in 'screwing up' the measure by the substitution of a lay for an ecclesiastical judge, and generally rendering it more distasteful, not to Ritualists alone, but even to moderate High Churchmen. On the other hand, it had been opposed by Lord Salisbury on the second reading in a speech of statesmanlike breadth and moderation, and one which displayed a far sounder view of the true attitude to be adopted by the State towards a Church of such a constitution and with such a history as ours than that which his

leader was afterwards to proclaim The three schools which exist within the Anglican Communion—*the High, the Low*, and the Broad, or, as Lord Salisbury preferred to style them, the Sacramental, the Emotional, and the Philosophical —have, *he pointed out*, been found, except when one or other of them has been temporarily crushed by the strong hand of power, in the Church in every age

They arise (he continued) not from any difference in the truth itself, but because the truth must necessarily assume different tints as it is refracted through the *media* of different minds But it is upon the frank and loyal toleration of these schools that the existence of your Establishment depends. The problem you have to solve is how to repress personal and individual eccentricities if you will how to repress all exhibitions of wilfulness, of lawlessness, of caprice, but at the same time that you do that you must carefully guard any measures which you introduce from injuring the consciences or suppressing the rights of either of the three schools of which the Church consists. On this condition alone can your legislation be safe. If you accomplish this end, if you solve this problem, no doubt you will remove causes of irritation, and conciliate many hearts and minds to the Church which are now alienated, and you will have done a good work. But if you legislate without solving the problem, if you disregard this condition, if you attempt to drive from the Church of England any one of the parties of which it is composed, if you tamper with the spirit of toleration of which she is the embodiment, you will produce a convulsion in the Church and imperil the interests of the State itself.

The House of Lords, however, which is just as liable on occasion to attacks of the No Popery fever as the popular assembly, was deaf to this wise and eloquent appeal The Bill was read a second time, 'screwed up' as aforesaid in Committee—not to 'concert,' but to 'discord pitch'—and was ultimately sent down to the House of Commons early

in July. On the 9th of that month the second reading was moved by Mr. Russell Gurney, and was opposed by Mr. Gladstone in an impassioned speech, at the conclusion of which he laid on the table six resolutions which he thought should form the basis of any legislation on the subject. They were such as to supply a watchful opponent with a plausible excuse for appealing to the strong and in many respects the just and reasonable English jealousy of ecclesiastical encroachment on the authority of the State. It was not likely that such a chance would escape Mr. Disraeli, and upon this hint he spake. Without a moment's hesitation, he stepped to the front, and undertook the patronage of the Bill. The debate was adjourned, and on the next Government night the Prime Minister stated that Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, directly raising, as he declared they did, the question of the *entire emancipation of the Church from* State control, must be regarded as a challenge which the Government was bound to take up, and that every facility would consequently be given for the discussion of the Bill.

On the following Wednesday—the standing orders having been suspended to allow the debate to proceed on that day—a singular scene occurred. Mr. Hardy, the Secretary of State for War, speaking from his usual place on the Treasury Bench, energetically attacked the measure, and later on the same afternoon his chief announced his intention of giving it his hearty support. After describing the three parties in the Church, whose respective characteristics he defined—with considerably less precision, especially as regards the second of them, than Lord Salisbury—as Ceremony, Enthusiasm, and Free Speculation, and declaring that no attack was contemplated upon any of them, he went on to use the long-remembered and resented words:

'I take the primary object of the Bill, whose powers, if it be enacted, will be applied and extended impartially to all subjects of her Majesty, to be this—to put down Ritualism' Going on to comment upon Mr Gladstone's declaration that he did not know what Ritualism was, the Prime Minister declared that that ignorance was not shared by the House of Commons or the country What the House of Commons and the country understood by Ritualism were practices by a portion of the clergy avowedly symbolic of doctrines which the same clergy are bound in the most solemn manner to refute and repudiate 'Therefore I think there can be no mistake among practical men as to what is meant when we say that it is our desire to discourage Ritualism'

The statesmanship of the course adopted on this occasion by Mr Disraeli has often been, and is to this day, questioned, but of its immediate popularity with most members of his party and of its consonance with the temper of the House of Commons, there can be no doubt Its success was also greatly assisted by the general political stagnation of the period and the consequent eagerness wherewith the question was seized upon by the press, which, of course, in most instances took the popular—that is, the 'Protestant'—side To journalists, moreover, as to certain distinguished members of Parliament, the subject had for a time, at any rate, all the charm of the unfamiliar, and they experienced something of that pleasure which must have attended Sir William Harcourt in his excursions among the Canonists The learning, not to say the unction, with which they discoursed daily on ritual observances, and sometimes even on theological mysteries, was most edifying It was remarked with caustic wit by the 'Spectator' that 'the newspapers

written principally by Sadducees,' were 'hot with discussions on phylacteries.' The jealous Erastianism of Parliament and the alarmed Protestantism of Fleet Street acted and reacted upon each other, and the Public Worship Bill was converted into a more efficient instrument, or what was intended and supposed to be a more efficient instrument, for the putting down of Ritualism.

An amendment, giving complainants an appeal to the archbishop where the bishop refused to act—or, in other words, an amendment removing what the minority considered to be the only safeguard against an abuse of the powers of the Bill—was carried against the opposition of Mr. Gladstone, and, thus 'strengthened,' the measure was sent back to the Upper House. Here Lord Salisbury, in a well-remembered speech, which was misunderstood at the time, and has often been both honestly and dishonestly misrepresented since, recommended that the new clause should be struck out. 'Much,' he observed, 'has been said of the majority in another place, and of the peril in which the Bill would be if the clause under discussion is rejected. There is a great deal of that kind of bluster when any particular course has been taken in the other House of Parliament. But it should be borne in mind that the majority was only twenty-three, and that those who are most interested in supporting the amendment are the very persons who, above all things, desire that the Bill shall pass. It is absurd, then, to suppose that if the clause be rejected, there will not be found twelve men among them with sufficient common sense to accept the Bill without it rather than lose it altogether.'

This shrewd calculation was verified by the event; for the Commons, after a debate enlivened by more than one

remarkable incident, agreed to the Lords' amendment, thus submitting to the elision of the obnoxious clause, and the Bill became law, with the 'Bishops veto' left absolute. But Lord Salisbury was taken severely to task for the impropriety of his assumed reference to the House of Commons by Sir William Harcourt, who described and deplored his language as the 'ill advised raillery of a rash and rancorous tongue.' It was in reply to this speech that Mr Disraeli made his famous reference to his colleague as 'not a man who measures his phrases,' but as 'one who is a great master of gibes and flouts and jeers', and putting the same construction upon the reference to 'bluster' as Sir William Harcourt had done, the Premier went on, in his half serious, half ironic manner, to ascribe to Lord Salisbury a deliberate intention of irritating his adversaries into a false move. 'My noble friend,' said Mr Disraeli, 'knows the House of Commons well, and he is not, perhaps, superior to the consideration that by making a speech of that kind, and taunting respectable men like ourselves with being a blustering majority, he probably might stimulate the *amour propre* of some individuals to take the course which he wants and to defeat the Bill.'

This, of course, was a very free paraphrase of the precise words of Lord Salisbury, who not only had never used the expression 'a blustering majority,' but, as he hastened to explain the following day, had not even had that particular majority in his mind. The 'bluster' against which he protested was in the Upper and not the Lower House. It had been argued, he said, by one of the members of the former assembly, 'that we were bound to take a particular course because the House of Commons were very resolved, and because, if we did not take that course the Bill would

be lost. My Lords, I have always objected to the argument when there is a difference of opinion between the two Houses, that it is the privilege of the House of Commons always to insist, and the duty of the House of Lords always to yield. It is not uncommon to use that argument when we come to the last discussions in conflicts of that kind, and I venture to think it is an argument of a nature which may be justly designated by the term "bluster." But whether that be the case or not, what I am now concerned to say is, that it never entered my head to use a term in the least degree disrespectful to the other House of Parliament. I regret that the statement should have been made, because I should exceedingly dislike to have it attached to my name, and by such distinguished authorities, or to have it thought that I could be guilty of such an offence at all.'

This explanation, at once spirited and courteous, of course closed the incident in its public aspect. And in further making it clear that Mr. Disraeli's somewhat pungent retort upon his colleague's former speech had been delivered under a misapprehension of its import, Lord Salisbury might have reasonably reckoned on satisfying the curious that the passage of arms between his chief and himself—if, indeed, a single thrust, dexterously parried, but not 'riposted,' can be so described—had left no coolness behind it. It would seem, however, that stupidity and malevolence were not convinced of this until after the Prime Minister had publicly complimented his colleague at a Lord Mayor's dinner on the ability of his Indian administration. So much for the piquant episode which has rescued the Parliamentary history of one of the most pretentiously and irritatingly futile pieces of modern legislation from otherwise well-merited oblivion.

The subsequent history of [illegible] tration forms the [illegible] 'Man proposes.' [illegible] Upper House in 18[illegible] to an attack from Lord [illegible] character of their [illegible] comparative political [illegible] might have [illegible] from the [illegible] it had been [illegible] might devote itself to the [illegible] socially useful [illegible] Far was it from [illegible] vernment or the [illegible] were doomed to [illegible] of domestic policy [illegible] career of the Parliament of [illegible] with [illegible] three years [illegible] programme.

For [illegible]

[illegible]

not care to risk the unpopularity of opposing them, and if some of them have disappointed their authors, others have proved valuable contributions to the statute book. In other matters, too, as well as these, the failure of the Opposition to find any available means of seriously damaging the Government became more and more conspicuous every day. The factious and factitious outcry against the Royal Titles Bill, and the desperate endeavour to make political capital out of the imaginary wrongs of the Gaikwar of Baroda—who, in spite of his easily explained acquittal by a curious Mixed Commission of English officials and Indian native princes on a charge of attempting the murder of the British Resident, was legitimately and most wisely deposed by the Secretary for India—spoke volumes as to the desperate straits to which the constitutional critics of the Government were reduced.

It looked as if they might have whistled for a wind for ever, and in vain; and, so far as home politics were concerned, perhaps they might. But in the meantime, and while even the most sanguine weather prophets of the Opposition were beginning to despair of the desired gale, a breeze was rising in an obscure corner of South-eastern Europe, which was destined to fill their sails to their hearts' content, and which for a moment threatened to wreck the vessel of their adversaries.

CHAPTER IX

The Eastern Question—Differences of English opinion thereon—The views of the Government—Lord Salisbury's mission to Constantinople—His policy and that of his colleagues—The preliminary sittings—The Conference—Obstinacy of the Turks—A final appeal—Returns to London—Lord Beaconsfield's defence.

THE story of the three momentous years 1876–78 has been often told, and it does not fall within the purpose of this work to rehearse it—or at any rate its earlier chapters—in anything like fulness of detail. During the first few stages of that prolonged crisis, as one may without exaggeration call it, which began with the trouble in the Herzegovina in the summer of 1875, and ended, so far as Europe was concerned, with the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin in July 1878, Lord Salisbury's public part in foreign affairs was in no way more conspicuous than that of the majority of his colleagues. The main burden of our foreign policy rested of course during these months on the shoulders of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and though Lord Salisbury, as chief of the India Office, may well have watched the course of events in Eastern Europe with more than ordinary Ministerial concern, it had not as yet become his duty to take any special measures for the protection of our great Asiatic dependency against the consequences or incidents of the attack which Russia was preparing to make upon the head of the Mahommedan faith. It was not

after the excesses committed by the Turkish irregulars in the suppression of a Bulgarian rising had led to a violent agitation in England, and Russia had been encouraged, by the consequent estrangement of English sympathies from the cause of Turkey, to intervene in the struggle between the Porte and the Principality of Servia, that Lord Salisbury was summoned to take a prominent part in the negotiations which thereupon ensued.

On October 31 the Russian Government sent an ultimatum to the Porte demanding its immediate assent to an armistice in the war with Servia, and threatening, in the event of refusal, to withdraw its representative from Constantinople. With this demand the Sultan and his advisers at once complied, and the British Government thereupon proposed to the Powers that a European Conference should at once assemble at Constantinople and endeavour to settle with Turkey the terms of an arrangement for the pacification of the disturbed territories within and upon her borders. And at the Guildhall Banquet of November 9, Lord Beaconsfield announced in a memorable speech that the Powers had assented to the proposal, and that Lord Salisbury would attend the Conference as the representative of this country.

The crisis had by this time become acute, and many English observers, not being either partisans in home politics or dominated by their sympathies with Russia on the one hand or Turkey on the other, were already beginning to suspect that war was inevitable. Many of those who had honestly lost their heads over the 'Bulgarian atrocities' were by this time in a way to recover them; but though they were thereby enabled to take a calmer and truer view of the policy of Russia than in those impassioned moments when

the most corrupt and barbarous of Christian States had appeared to them in the light of a righteously indignant Power inspired only by a holy wrath against oppression and cruelty, the opening of their eyes did but disclose to them a still darker prospect for the peace of Europe. They were now forced to admit that if Russia, considered as a disinterested crusader on behalf of humanity, had been likely to attack Turkey, a descent of Russia, regarded as a calculating aggressor in quest of increased territory, upon her neighbour was still more to be feared. For in the latter case, moderation and even meekness on the part of the intended victim would obviously fail to avert attack, and, supposing the victim to suspect the design upon him, would be far less likely to be displayed. In other words, if Russia meant war on one pretext or another, which seemed daily growing more and more probable, and if Turkey knew that she meant it, which to say the least of it was far from improbable, a European Conference would be idle. The two contending Powers would simply join in it for their own purposes, and would be merely awaiting the completion of their preparations to break it off.

While, however, this desponding view was generally gaining ground among Englishmen, their agreement for the most part ended here. From any half dozen men who concurred in thinking that before many months were over there would be war between Russia and Turkey, it was often possible to collect at least half as many different opinions as to the way in which such a war would affect British interests, and as to the policy which, in consequence, it behoved us to pursue. There were a few extreme partisans on either side who held respectively that England was absolutely unconcerned with the fate of the Ottoman Empire, and that

its 'integrity and independence' in the strictest sense of the word, ought, on mere grounds of self-preservation to be defended by force of arms against attack. And ranging between these two extremes, there were those who agreed in thinking that in certain given conditions of danger to the existence of the Turkish Empire, intervention for its protection might be imperatively demanded by British interests, but who held indefinitely varying views, both as to the point at which that demand would arise and the particular steps by which it should be met.

That these differences of opinion were reflected in Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet is likely enough; indeed, we know by the evidence of subsequent facts that two Ministers differed not only from their colleagues to the point of resignation, but from each other on the last of the questions above referred to. But reviewing matters from the standpoint of the present day, it seems but reasonable to believe that the dissensions of the Cabinet were both antedated and exaggerated by public rumour. It is doubtful whether, in spite of all the gossip current in those days, there was much divergence even of sympathies among them, but there is anyhow no solid ground for believing that at this particular juncture, or indeed for more than a year to come, there was any material disagreement among them as to the proper lines of British policy. The saying of the Foreign Secretary, that 'the greatest of British interests was peace,' commanded, we may be sure, an equally hearty assent from all his colleagues alike. No doubt their modes of 'seeking peace and ensuing it' varied with their respective temperaments, and one Minister may have entertained as strong a belief in the salutary effect of 'firm' language as others did in the efficacy of conciliatory utterances.

Adequate, however, as was this explanation of the differences occasionally noticeable between the speech and attitude of one member of the Cabinet and another, its adequacy was not admitted and indeed not recognised by the deeply interested and somewhat excited public opinion of the time The belief prevailed in many minds that as early as the autumn of 1876 Lord Beaconsfield and certain of his colleagues were pulling opposite ways that the *Prime Minister, in obedience to his 'Semitic instincts* was bent upon dragging England into a war for the maintenance of the 'integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire' in the fullest and oldest fashioned sense of the phrase, and that the more 'English' and more prudent members of his Cabinet were straining every nerve in opposition to the rash policy of their chief This idea found favour, as it happened in two quite opposite quarters, and in both the wish was father to the thought Turcophil Tories and Russophil Radicals alike hoped that it might be true—the former because its realisation would to their thinking demonstrate the political genius and patriotism of the Prime Minister, the latter because it would, as they thought, justify their severest denunciations of his wickedness To each of them in short the statesman who was supposed to regard British interests as bound up with those of the people whom the Radical, described as the 'Unspeakable,' and the Tory as 'Our Ancient Ally,' was the Beaconsfield of their imagination Such a conception satisfied, on opposite moral grounds, their respective ideals, and they vied with each other in the endeavour to popularise it

Lord Salisbury's appointment was first publicly announced, as has been said, at the Guildhall Banquet, and the speech in which the announcement was made contained

the famous reference to the 'resources' of England, as a country which would have no need to 'inquire whether she could enter into a second or a third campaign.' The effect of this flourish was exactly what might have been anticipated. 'Magnificent!' exclaimed the 'Jingo,' and 'Monstrous!' echoed his opponents. 'The Prime Minister,' said the former, 'is with equal spirit and judgment notifying to Russia that England is not going into the Conference to ratify a Three Emperors' scheme for the partition of Turkey, but to uphold the treaty law of Europe.' 'Lord Beaconsfield,' cried the latter, 'is bent on reassuring his friends at Constantinople as to the import of English assent to the Conference. For fear they should mistake him for a serious supporter of the just demands of Europe, he takes this means of telling them that, if they reject those demands, they will be backed by England.'

Yet the two sets of critics who thus substantially concurred in their description of Lord Beaconsfield's admirable or detestable designs at Constantinople agreed also, curiously enough, in believing that he had made the worst possible choice of an instrument. The friends of the Turk shook solemn heads over the selection of Lord Salisbury to represent her Majesty's Government at the Conference; Mr. Gladstone effusively welcomed it at the St. James's Hall meeting, whereat, of course, the heads shook the more. How the legend of Lord Salisbury's antagonism to the policy of the Prime Minister arose and gained ground it is somewhat difficult to say. Partly, no doubt, it was due to a belief, dating from the days of the Reform Bill, and revived—absurdly enough, it is true—by more recent incidents, that the two statesmen failed to 'see eye to eye' on most subjects, and that, if Lord Beaconsfield's sym-

pathies were strongly Turkish, it might be fairly assumed that Lord Salisbury's would set in the opposite direction. But in addition to this, it was with much seriousness remarked that Lord Salisbury was a High Anglican, and that 'some High Anglicans were enthusiastic partisans of the Eastern Christian communities wherefrom the conclusion that Lord Salisbury was himself an enthusiastic partisan of these interesting races was driven home with all the poignant force of a syllogism barbed with an 'undistributed middle'

His selection by the Prime Minister to thwart 'the policy of Lord Beaconsfield' was not, to be sure, a step which exactly explained itself Nevertheless, a plausible explanation of it was not beyond the resources of the *quidnunc's* ingenuity It was the result of a 'compromise,' absolutely necessary ('I assure you') to prevent a break up of the Cabinet Lord Salisbury, indeed, threatened ('I have it on the best authority') to resign if he were not sent to Constantinople, and Lord Beaconsfield had to give way The ultimate arrangement of the matter was that Lord Derby (a prudent and humane statesman if left to himself, but 'hypnotised' by the Prime Minister, according to the Radicals of that day, into a mere tool of 'Semitic' policy) should furnish Lord Salisbury with instructions framed as far as possible in the interests of the Turkish Government, and that Lord Salisbury should then go to Constantinople, and proceed to interpret and act upon these instructions as far as possible in the interests of the rebellious Christian subjects of the Porte Of course, observed the 'Daily News' cheerfully, 'Lord Salisbury is in theory subordinate to the Cabinet and to the Foreign Minister, from whom he receives his instructions, but in such cases as these the stronger will has a

faculty of dictating the orders which it is to obey.' The anti-Russian party in this country were naturally indignant, both at the cool assumption that her Majesty's representative would thus play his colleagues false, and at the anticipatory approval of his assumed perfidy; but there is reason to think that a certain number of people among us rather admired the supposed arrangement as an illustration of the 'national genius for compromise.'

The suspicions of the one party and the self-congratulations of the other were confirmed by the conduct of the British delegate. Before going to Constantinople, Lord Salisbury paid visits to Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. Why? Was not the Eastern question more our own concern than that of any other European State? Was not England 'the greatest Mahommedan Power,' and could it be doubted that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby (under hypnotic influence) had instructed the Secretary of State for India to inform the Conference that England intended to 'behave as such?' Why, then, it was indignantly asked by the more ardent advocates of the theory that British interests were bound up with the 'integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire'—why, then, should an English Minister go, 'cap in hand,' to Prince Bismarck or Count Andrassy, or any other Continental minister, to learn his views, instead of walking straight into the Conference Chamber and flinging down a British ultimatum on the council table? What could it mean, asked politicians of this school (and their Radical adversaries chuckled as they echoed, 'What, indeed?'), except that Lord Salisbury was arranging with the enemies of the Turk for compelling him to surrender?

On the arrival of the British Plenipotentiary at Constantinople, matters became worse and worse. For not only

did he make the acquaintance of the Russian representative, General Ignatieff, but his relations with that 'sweet enemy' became so unpatriotically friendly that the two delegates were actually seen walking arm in arm with each other in the streets of Pera! It was impossible to conceal so compromising an incident from the watchful eye of 'our own correspondent' at Constantinople. He reported it to his employers at home, it was duly and gravely chronicled in the daily press, and hands of holy horror were held up at it by solemn instructors of the public, whose portentous consciousness of 'statesmanlike' responsibility had deadened their native sense of the ridiculous. They might at least have remembered their Dickens, and, recalling the familiarities exchanged between the two eminent advocates portrayed by the great humourist, have refrained from such a display of the somewhat fatuous simplicity of Mr Pickwick.

In justice, however, to these able and at that time influential writers, it is only fair to admit that the series of events which followed supplied them with some excuse for misconception. The text of Lord Salisbury's instructions was of course unpublished, and therefore unknown to the English public until after the dissolution of the Conference, but its general tenor was no secret, and it soon became apparent to jealous observers of the course of the negotiations at Constantinople that the '*English proposals*,' as they were called, were undergoing modification, and assuming a more exacting shape as against Turkey before being submitted to the Porte at all. Thus, although it had been understood that the English Government had been *especially urgent in insisting—against, as was believed, the* wish of Russia—that representatives of the Porte should

assist at the Conference, a series of preliminary sittings were held from which Turkey was excluded.

Not only so, complained a hostile newspaper critic, but it was these meetings which constituted the Conference in the only true sense of the word; and 'the representatives of the Porte were subsequently admitted not so much to confer with the European delegates as to be informed of their decision.' 'Moreover,' proceeds the same indignant writer, the 'proceedings at the "Preliminary Conference" amounted to a breach of faith, an infringement of the conditions upon which Turkey had consented to a Conference. Not only did the delegates of the Powers take upon themselves to discuss the "English proposals" in the absence of Turkish representatives, but they stepped beyond the limits there prescribed, and in effect discussed, formulated, and settled a different programme of their own. A comparison of the proposal of the European delegates with the programme so carefully drawn up by Lord Derby will show how wide was the departure from the terms upon which the Conference was supposed to have met. The English programme proposed peace with Servia on the basis "in general terms" of the *status quo*: yet at the first sitting of the plenary Conference the Porte was called upon to grant an accession of territory to the conquered country. The programme expressly affirmed the "independence" of the Ottoman Empire; but the Conference began by submitting proposals which would have handed over the fiscal and judicial system of Turkey to the control of foreigners. The programme, while suggesting a system of local self-government, made no mention of any foreign guarantees for these administrative reforms, or indeed of any guarantees whatever, other than those inherent in the

scheme of administration itself, but the Turkish plenipotentiaries found themselves confronted on their admission with the proposal to admit a corps of Belgian *gendarmerie* to Ottoman territory.'

This account of matters is exact enough, albeit from a hostile hand, and though the question 'How did these extraordinary changes come about?' is answered perversely enough by the writer with the suggestion that it was the result of a conversation between Lord Salisbury and General Ignatieff,' there is no denying that the change may well have seemed 'extraordinary' enough at the time to English onlookers, especially to those who started with the preconceived notion that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby (mysteriously subjugated by him) were interposing the shield of English diplomacy—with the sword of English power in the background—between Turkey and the aggressive designs of her hereditary enemy. It required the evidence of Blue Books—if, indeed, even that was sufficient—to convince these suspicious bystanders that the British delegate at the Conference of Constantinople was in complete accord throughout with his colleagues at home; and that if in the preliminary sittings of the delegates he consented to enlarge the scope and increase the stringency of the original English demands upon the Porte, he did so in pursuance of a policy upon which the Cabinet were for the time being entirely at one.

For at this juncture of events they were no doubt one and all, from Lord Beaconsfield downwards, convinced of two things: first, that the English people were not prepared, at any rate in the first instance, to take up arms in defence of 'the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire'; and secondly, that at the stage which matters had then

reached a Russian attack upon Turkey was only to be averted, if at all, by coming to an agreement with Russia as to the terms of settlement to be proposed at Constantinople, and then bringing all possible pressure to bear upon the Porte to procure its compliance with them. And to the attainment of this end there is every reason to believe that Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, and, in fact, the entire Cabinet energetically and loyally co-operated. On this view of the policy and purposes of the British Government the course pursued by our representative at Constantinople, however unsatisfactory it may have appeared to a certain school of politicians in this country, becomes of course intelligible. It was plain that a thorough understanding with Russia must precede any attempt to exert influence upon Turkey. The demands of the former Power required to be brought into conformity with the will of Europe, and to be sustained by the approval of the European concert, before there could be any use in presenting them to the latter Power.

Nor was the contemplated result arrived at by a mere process of concession to Russian pretensions. On the contrary, there were waivers on both sides. The adverse critics above quoted were unaware at the time that the 'English proposals' of settlement had not, and never had had, the field to themselves. There were Russian proposals, and those of a somewhat formidable kind, before the Powers also. At the end of the previous September, Count Schouvaloff had proposed to Lord Derby that if the Porte refused the conditions of peace with Servia which England was then putting forward, a simultaneous coercive movement on the part of all the Powers should be made at once. This movement, it was suggested, should consist,

firstly, of the occupation of Bosnia by an Austrian force; secondly, of the occupation of Bulgaria by a Russian Army; and thirdly, of the entrance into the Bosphorus of the united fleets of Europe. The Czar, however, was ready, it was added, to drop the first two suggestions, and to regard the entrance of the fleet into the Bosphorus as sufficient.

One of Lord Salisbury's first steps on arriving at Constantinople was to inform General Ignatieff that he was instructed to oppose any scheme of military occupation; to which the Russian representative at once replied that his Government had no intention of insisting on their proposal. By this concession he no doubt did something to predispose his British colleague in favour of the project which he submitted in substitution for that which had been thus abandoned. Anyhow, the Preliminary Conference was not long in arriving at the conclusion that some sort of occupation of Turkish territory by the troops of some European Power or other would be necessary, and Lord Salisbury communicated [illegible] Government at home. [illegible]

[illegible]

concessions on the part of Turkey to her hereditary enemy and secular despoiler; that it was better for Europe that these perils should be risked by the Porte than that a great European war should be allowed to break out; and that England therefore should co-operate *ex animo* with the other great Powers in endeavouring to press this view of the matter on the Sultan and his advisers. The weak point in the policy, as the British plenipotentiary no doubt perceived as clearly as anyone, was that there was nothing in it to recommend it to the Porte in preference to facing that alternative of war which we and other European Powers happened to regard from our own points of view as so manifestly ineligible.

Nor was it long before this weak point betrayed itself. With the trifling exception of the assent of Turkey thereto, the arrangement was complete; but upon the Preliminary Conference converting itself into a Plenary Conference by the addition of the representatives of the Porte, it was discovered that this assent was not to be had on any terms. It was in vain that, with a bluntness which alarmed and scandalised English critics of like mind with those above quoted, Lord Salisbury urged upon the Sultan's chief minister, Midhat Pasha, the dire necessities of his master's situation. It was in vain that he pointed out to him how serious for the Sultan was the danger of rejecting the demands of Europe, and, on the other hand, how much exaggerated was the injury or risk of injury which he would incur by compliance. 'There is no ground in history,' he wrote in a despatch explaining and defending the proposals of the Powers—and it must be admitted in the light of subsequent events that his words contained a larger measure of truth than some of us at that day were prepared to recognise—'there is no ground in

history for the belief that the grant of practical self government to the Bulgarian province would develop any such desire as that of incorporation in the Russian Empire in the population' On the other hand, the risks of a *non possumus* were, in a speech afterwards quoted verbatim and with undissembled horror in the leading editorial columns of an anti Russian journal, thus frankly exposed before the Conference by the representative of her Britannic Majesty Admitting that no 'right' of interference between the Sultan and his subjects could be founded on the treaty of 1856, Lord Salisbury proceeded as follows

But if this Conference separates because the Sultan and those about his Imperial Majesty do not choose to listen to the counsels of the six guaranteeing Powers, the position of Turkey in the face of Europe will have suffered a complete change, and will be very perilous It will be henceforth understood in all countries that the Porte, after having for twenty years enjoyed the security which was secured to it by the agreement of the Christian Powers, refuses to lend its ear to their demands against the sufferings which the Christian subjects of his Imperial Majesty are undergoing The conscience of Europe will be moved by the conviction that she exercises no further influence in the councils of the Sublime Porte, and that she can no longer acquit herself of the responsibility imposed upon her by the efforts that she has made to protect Turkey *It is* necessary for the Porte now to reflect on the *grave consequences which may* result from such a revulsion of feeling in the public opinion of Europe. They are hastening to a period but little distant dangers which will threaten the existence of Turkey if she leaves herself entirely isolated. I am charged to declare formally that Great Britain is resolved to *give her* sanction neither to bad administration nor to oppression, and if the Porte, through obstinacy or inertness, resists the efforts which are being made at present with the object of placing the Ottoman Empire upon a more secure basis, the responsibility for the consequences which will follow will rest solely on the Sultan and his advisers.

This solemn appeal was, however, fruitless. The Pashas, according to their wont, were prodigal of promises, but chary of guarantees. They steadily refused to assent to the military and other measures demanded of them to insure the effective reorganisation of the disturbed provinces, and nothing remained for the representatives of the Powers but to break up the Conference. It met for the last time on January 20, 1877, and two days later Lord Salisbury left Constantinople for England.

It was assuredly no fault of his that his mission had failed. Its failure was in no degree owing, as some of his English censors asserted, to his display of any undue partiality for the Greek Christians, or to any excessive complaisance exhibited by him towards the demands of General Ignatieff. Neither was it due, as was alleged by other English censors, or by the same censors at other times, to any division of counsels among his colleagues at home. On the contrary, they were united in a policy of which he was a loyal and convinced exponent. They were at one in their belief that war could only be averted by large Turkish concessions, and in the desire to bring the utmost moral pressure to bear upon the Porte to procure its assent to them. They may well have differed among themselves as to the probability of procuring that assent, but if so, it is only reasonable to presume that Lord Salisbury was not an adherent to the more sanguine view. True as it may have been, that prudence dictated the compliance of Turkey with the demands made upon her, it is no less true that pride as strongly dissuaded from them, if only that they involved serious and conspicuous derogations of Ottoman sovereignty. They were such concessions, in short, as a military Power does not usually make to the inhabitants of

territories which it has won and rules by the sword, except after defeat in the field, and even while the British delegate was endeavouring to convince the Pashas of the advantages of granting 'practical self government to the Bulgarian provinces,' the Secretary of State for India must now and then have asked himself what amount of rhetorical persuasion, and what force of appeal to policy and prudence, would be necessary on the part of Russia and the European Powers to obtain the assent of England to the establishment of administrative autonomy in the Punjab

'Surrender a part of your Empire, or you will lose it all,' is the only argument, other than defeat in the field, which could possibly prevail in such a case, either at Constantinople or Calcutta, and then only if the facts and probabilities of the situation irresistibly drove it home Some of us thought that facts and probabilities would drive the argument home to the minds of the Turks in the winter of 1876, but they failed, and as the event proved, they rightly failed to do so Doubtless there were Englishmen who had persuaded themselves that if Turkey refused to 'listen to reason,' she could and would be left by England absolutely at the mercy of her enemy, and that that enemy could and would be allowed to have his will of her, even to the application of Mr Gladstone's 'bag and baggage policy' over the whole of her European dominions, and to the seizure of Constantinople by Russia But the Sultan's shrewd advisers knew England better, as it turned out, than these natives of her soil They knew that, so far as territorial gain and loss were concerned—and lives and money go for very little with Mahommedans who see Paradise ahead of them, and have left bankruptcy behind—they had everything to gain by fighting Russia for their Balkan provinces,

and nothing to lose. 'The non-intervention resolves of the English Cabinet were perfectly well known to us,' wrote Midhat Pasha a year afterwards in an English review, 'but we knew still better that the general interests of Europe and the particular interests of England were bound up in our dispute with Russia; that in spite of all the declarations of the English Cabinet, it appeared to us to be absolutely impossible for her to avoid interfering sooner or later in this Eastern dispute.' On February 13, 1878, just a year and three weeks after the Turkish statesman, relying upon this ultimate necessity of British interference, politely bowed the baffled European delegates out of the council chamber, a British fleet under Admiral Hornby steamed through the Dardanelles, in verification of his forecast.

Parliament met on February 8, and Ministers took an early opportunity of dispelling the popular delusion as to their divided counsels. Lord Salisbury spoke at some length in explanation of the course taken at the Conference. He described his policy and that of his colleagues as simply that of 'trying by all peaceable means in our power to induce Turkey to open her eyes to the danger which surrounds her, to awake from her infatuation and give to the poor populations which have suffered so much some measure of liberty and safety for life and honour.' And Lord Beaconsfield bore testimony to the complete accord which subsisted in the Cabinet with respect to this policy and the efforts made to give effect to it. Lord Salisbury, he said, had been 'supposed not to have the confidence of his colleagues because he seems to have been attacked in some newspapers generally supporting the Administration, and because his colleagues have not written leading articles in his defence. Every public man

is liable to such [illegible]
in the public newspapers [illegible]
as many leading [illegible]
written against me [illegible]
upon my honour [illegible]
ever wrote a single line [illegible]

The [illegible]
in no degree [illegible]
soundness of [illegible]
"the spirit of the [illegible]
Adverting [illegible]
Lord [illegible]
significant language [illegible]
are told that the [illegible]
was no [illegible]
his [illegible]
was the [illegible]
[illegible]
a great many other [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
only [illegible]
and I believe [illegible]
the same. [illegible]
common [illegible]
made so [illegible]
would have [illegible]

A [illegible]
instance of [illegible]
was despatched [illegible]
pean Courts concluding [illegible]
the month of March [illegible]

which the reciprocal disarmament of Russia and Turkey might take place, was signed by the representatives of the six great Powers in London. Early in April it was presented to the Porte and rejected. The outbreak of hostilities was now seen to be only a matter of days.

CHAPTER X

Declaration of war—The 'Charter of English Policy'—Anxiety in England—The 'large maps'—Progress of the war and fall of Plevna—Differences in the Cabinet—Lord Carnarvon on the Crimean war—His resignation—Fleet despatched to the Dardanelles—The Reserves called out—Resignation of Lord Derby—Explanations in the House of Lords

On April 24, 1877, Russia declared war against the Ottoman Empire, and her forces crossed the Turkish frontiers, European and Asiatic, on the same day. About a fortnight later, Lord Derby addressed a document afterwards described by the Prime Minister as the 'Charter of our policy,' to Prince Gortschakoff, pledging the British Government to neutrality in the war 'so long as Turkish interests alone were involved.' Other interests, however, 'which they are equally bound and determined to defend' might be imperilled if the war were [illegible], and these Lord Derby proceeded, on the part of the Government, to indicate.

Foremost among these interests was the security of the route to India by way of the Suez Canal. 'Any attempt,' wrote the Foreign Secretary, 'to blockade or otherwise interfere with the Canal or its approaches would be regarded by her Majesty's Government as a menace to India and as a grave injury to the commerce of the world. On both these grounds any such step [illegible]

now almost entirely subsided, and it was only a very small and fanatical section of Englishmen who still continued urging their country to take part with Russia in 'coercing the Turk.' On the other hand the minority which was prepared to counsel the immediate armed intervention of England as an ally of Turkey in the struggle was certainly not much larger Nevertheless, as the year advanced and the events of the war unfolded themselves, the position of the Government became more and more difficult The heroic defence of Plevna by the Turkish forces under Osman Pasha appealed powerfully to English sympathies, while, on the other hand, the successes of Russia in Asiatic Turkey excited a certain amount of English alarm It soon became clear that neither the forces nor the fortresses of the Ottoman Porte in that region were strong enough to offer any very prolonged resistance to the Russian arms, and Russia, once established at Erzeroum, would command that very valley of the Euphrates along which we had but a few years before been seriously considering the advisability of constructing a railway to the Persian Gulf as a second route to our Indian possessions

Thus throughout the summer and autumn of 1878 the feeling in favour of Turkey continued to grow The war, in deed, had not lasted two months before Ministers found their ears importunately assailed with the cry of 'British interests in danger' A considerable share in the task of resistance to this popular movement devolved, not unnaturally, upon the official guardian of that particular British interest which was alleged to be principally imperilled. As Secretary for India, Lord Salisbury no doubt felt himself bound to allay the apprehensions of danger to our Eastern dependency, and his, as we all know, is one of those natures to which it would

Egypt, and that any one advancing into Egypt has the key to Africa. By this list of keys long drawn out he shows that the present victories of Russia seriously menace South Africa. I have done my best to console him, but I feel that his anxious feelings are only characteristic of the apprehensions which I hear around me'

This pleasantry, which did but slightly exaggerate the *forebodings of an article recently* published in a London newspaper—the 'list of keys' closing in this case with Egypt and the overland route to India—was no doubt a fairer hit than the other But its discretion was no less doubtful Both sallies only served to irritate many Englishmen, Anglo Indian, and other, who were as familiar with all the geographical distances in question as the Indian Secretary himself, and who naturally resented being held up to the public as ignorant simpletons merely because they differed in opinion from him as to the amount of military and other difficulty interposed by these distances to a Russian advance

Such inconsiderate jests, moreover, have the habit of coming, like the curses of the proverb, 'home to roost' The day was not far distant when Lord Salisbury *and his* colleagues were to engage in a war the policy of which was plausibly assailable and was in fact, assailed by the *very* arguments which he here supplied In less than a year and a half from the utterance of these long remembered words, an opponent of the Afghan War might have asked Lord Salisbury whether the distance between Askabad and Peshawur *had* diminished because half a dozen Russian officers had been entertained by Shere Ali at Cabul and *whether in any case even the* distance from the Afghan capital itself to the Indian frontier would not look somewhat formidable on a map of the Ordnance scale

break down the resistance of the invaded in Europe before any danger of this sort could possibly arise

But on December 10 the scene changed. On that day Plevna fell. Osman Pasha and his thirty thousand stout soldiers became prisoners of war, and the road to the Balkans lay open before Russia. Three weeks later, on New Year's Day, 1878, General Gourko, with the Russian Imperial Guard, crossed the Etropol Balkans—a north westward running spur of the mountain chain—and pushed on to Sofia, which was captured virtually without a struggle. Early in the next week Skobeleff and his force made their way across the main range, by the Troyan Pass, marched eastward and occupied Kezanlik, thus commanding the southern outlet of the Schipka, of which General Radetzky held the northern entrance, and shutting up as in a trap the Turkish troops then in occupation of the pass This force, after a severe engagement, was captured by General Radetzky, and with this the resisting power of Turkey collapsed The Russians marched to Adrianople and occupied it without a fight Suleiman Pasha, with the remnant of the Ottoman army, fell back to Kavala on the coast of the Ægean, whence he embarked to Constantinople. The whole Balkan Peninsula lay at the feet of Russia. There was nothing to stop her advance to the peninsula of Gallipoli, where she could close the Dardanelles against the fleets of all Europe, while the remainder of her army pursued their eastward march to Constantinople

The internal history of the Beaconsfield Administration during the three eventful and exciting months which elapsed between the fall of Plevna and the definitive resignation of Lord Derby, awaits the Greville of the future. Or it may exist in the pages of some Ministerial diarist, not to be

such menace to arise, what military or naval measures must we adopt to meet it?

That the Cabinet split upon the latter of these questions is matter of history To some people it seemed to be also a matter of reproach to Ministers that they were thus unable to agree Nevertheless to those who look at the question a little more closely, this division of counsels will, I think, be seen to discredit our political system rather than our politicians Surely, if it has become proverbial that a council of war never fights—or in other words that among, say, half a dozen generals, there is sure to be a majority unduly opposed to risks—it is hardly surprising that sixteen civilians should not have possessed, without exception, the requisite amount of nerve The wonder would have been if they had been all of one mind, and perhaps the wonder will be, if any resolutions which may possibly involve the country in war are taken unanimously by any unwieldy Cabinet of the future

It seems tolerably clear that differences began to manifest themselves in the Cabinet between the fall of Plevna—*if no earlier—and the end of the year* On December 13, two days after the news of Osman Pasha's surrender reached England, a despatch was addressed by Lord Derby to the Government of St Petersburg, expressing the hope that if the Russians advanced south of the Balkans, no attempt would be made to occupy Constantinople or the Dardanelles, and adding that if any such attempt were made, 'the Queen's Government must hold themselves free to take whatever course might appear to them necessary for the *protection of British interests*' A Cabinet council was held on the following day, Friday, December 14 when the new situation, it may be presumed was anxiously

by the Czar with Colonel Wellesley in July, that Constantinople should only be occupied if it became an absolute military necessity to do so 'If the obstinacy or illusions of the Porte,' said Prince Gortschakoff, 'shall oblige his Majesty to pursue his military operations in order to dictate a peace responding to the openly proclaimed object of the war, his Imperial Majesty has always reserved to himself, and still continues to claim in regard to this point, the full right of action which is the claim of every belligerent.' The despatch concluded by asking that the British interests which this proceeding might touch should be still further defined, so that some means might be found to reconcile these interests with those of Russia

This despatch, the substance of which was known by telegraph a fortnight before its full text arrived, no doubt strengthened the peace party in the Cabinet, though it was obvious, of course, for their opponents to reply that 'military necessity' is an extremely elastic term, and that Russia had only to propose impossible conditions of armistice to Turkey in order to provide herself with the required pretext for pushing on to Constantinople Meanwhile an offer of English good offices in mediation between the belligerents had been met by Russia with the reply that the submission of Turkey must be signified by her application for an armistice to the Russian commander in the field. This answer created, not quite justly perhaps, a certain amount of irritation in England, and undoubtedly added, with more show of reason, to the apprehension that Russian diplomacy was preparing to have its hand pretendedly forced by Russian militarism

On January 2, the desire to combat this apprehension became too strong for the official discretion of one of the

was good enough to ask me for a copy of it, and so the matter ended, but no public or private disavowal was uttered or hinted at with regard to what I then said. I have therefore felt myself justified, and I still feel myself justified, in believing that where no such disapproval was uttered, I had not misrepresented the opinion of her Majesty's Government at that time.'

No incident could better illustrate the engaging simplicity of Lord Carnarvon's character, and his well known tendency to suppose that conscious rectitude of motive is a substitute for discretion. One can quite believe that the literary style of his memorandum was admirable, and its matter theoretically convincing. The 'propositions' which he had 'laid down' in his reply to the South African deputation were no doubt in perfect accord with the 'charter' of English policy, as framed at the outbreak of the war. No doubt, too, Lord Carnarvon thoroughly felt that so soon as any 'British interest' therein declared inviolable should appear to him to be in any way menaced, he would be as ready as any of his colleagues to take active measures for its protection. And in the consciousness of this, he did not hesitate to describe a war waged five and twenty years before—also for the protection of British interests, albeit in his opinion erroneously conceived—as a war of which nobody would be 'insane enough' to desire the repetition. There spoke the statesman who, because he was conscious of his own determination to uphold the integrity of the Empire, saw no objection to discussing Home Rule a few years afterwards as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland with an Irish Nationalist leader who was known to be aiming at the destruction of the unity of the realm.

Lord Carnarvon's complacent inference from the silence

was still on its way, a Council was held in the absence of Lord Derby, who was confined to his house by indisposition Here, having before them a telegram from Mr Layard transmitting a report that the Russians were marching on Gallipoli, Ministers took the momentous resolution to despatch the fleet to the Dardanelles, and on the following day Lord Carnarvon tendered his resignation to his chief The same day, however, Prince Gortschakoff's reply arrived, and Lord Beaconsfield, anxious to avoid or defer as long as possible a rupture with his colleague, informed Lord Carnarvon that the resolution of the 14th was rescinded, and that the proposed sailing orders to the fleet would not be given

Parliament met on the 17th with the Colonial Secretary's resignation still in the hands of the Prime Minister, who returned it to him with the statement that 'there was no important difference' between them Their agreement, however, was but of brief duration On January 23, the Cabinet again met, and reports having now reached Ministers that the Russians were marching to Adrianople, that crowds of refugees were pouring into the Turkish capital, and that the Sultan was about to fly to Broussa, while in the meantime the all important information as to the terms of peace proposed by Russia to Turkey was being strictly, and as was suspected, studiously, withheld, it was resolved both to despatch the fleet definitively to Constantinople and to ask Parliament for a vote of credit of six millions The order to sail was sent off the same evening

On the following day both Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby tendered their resignations, but on the evening of that day, informal and private information having been received of the conclusion of an armistice, together

[illegible] the [illegible] Ministers [illegible] The Treaty of [illegible] was signed [illegible], but it was not till [illegible] from [illegible] brought [illegible] Congress, which [illegible]

In this [illegible], the [illegible] Chancellor, who [illegible] European Cabinets, [illegible] and [illegible] that [illegible] the [illegible] Government was [illegible] other Powers the liberty of [illegible] such [illegible] Congress as they [illegible] of these [illegible] the Cabinet [illegible] the Lord [illegible] Government [illegible] of a Congress and to call out the Reserves. On the following morning Lord Derby—[illegible] and on the following evening in the House of Lords explained the step in a brief statement in which he [illegible] that measures had been [illegible] by the Cabinet which he could not [illegible] in the interest of European [illegible] of the country [illegible] of [illegible]

With these measures [illegible] a Cabinet [illegible] which had never been [illegible] Majesty's [illegible]

mission, divulged. Irregularly, and without that permission, the measures in question were alleged by Lord Derby in the House of Lords in the July following to have included, together with the calling out of the Reserves, a decision to 'seize upon and occupy the island of Cyprus, together with a point on the Syrian coast, a project which was to be carried out by a secret naval expedition sent out from England, with or without the consent of the Sultan.' Lord Salisbury, who followed him, denied that any such resolution had ever been taken by the Cabinet, though he admitted that 'all kinds of contingencies are spoken of and all possible policies discussed at Cabinet meetings, and that it was quite possible that his noble friend may have heard some project discussed by this member of the Cabinet or that.' The two accounts are fairly reconcilable, and the alleged conflict of statements between the two Ministers has been much exaggerated. It is easy to understand that even a 'discussion' of some such foreign adventure, *plus* an actual resolution to call out the Reserves, would be quite enough to drive Lord Derby from office.

CHAPTER XI

Lord Salisbury becomes Foreign Secretary—The Salisbury Circular—Its effect—Agreement for a congress—The unauthentic memorandum—Ministerial answers and their defence—The Treaty of Berlin—The Afghan war—Mr Gladstone's 'passionate pilgrimage'—The elections of 1880

It was a turning point in the career of both statesmen, and for the younger of them it proved that decisive tidal hour in his affairs from which the flood was henceforth to bear him without check or hindrance to the highest political fortune On April 1, Lord Salisbury's appointment to the post of Foreign Secretary was announced in Parliament, and on the following morning, to the boundless gratification of the public and to the infinite chagrin of those who had chosen to assume that Lord Derby's views of policy were in the main identical with those of his successor, the memorable Salisbury Circular, a note addressed to the representatives of the various Powers in justification of the refusal of England to attend the Congress, appeared in the public prints It was a document conspicuous alike for its dignified spirit, its high argumentative power, and the firm though courteous resolution of its language, and its immediate effect was not only to rally all the patriotic elements in the country to the side of the Government, but to convince Russia—as her subsequent diplomacy showed—that

her arrogant attitude must be abandoned, and that some accommodation with England, which would render the meeting of a Congress possible, must at all costs be sought.

The circular began by setting forth the impossibility, from the point of view either of policy or of international law, of admitting the pretensions of Russia to reserve to herself a right of refusing at discretion to accept a discussion, in a Congress of the Powers, of any provisions of the treaty of San Stefano which she chose to declare final. Even if the terms of the treaty were such as were likely to be, without exception, approved, an inspection of the instrument would show, the Foreign Secretary said, that her Majesty's Government 'could not in an European Congress accept any partial or fragmentary examination of its provisions.' Every material stipulation which it contained involved a departure from the treaty of 1856, and it was impossible therefore for her Majesty's Government, without violating the spirit of the Protocol of the Conference of 1871 (which had affirmed it to be 'an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a *treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless* with the consent of the contracting Powers by means of an amicable arrangement'), to acquiesce in 'the withdrawal from the cognizance of the Powers of articles in the Treaty of San Stefano which are modifications of existing treaty engagements and inconsistent with them.'

Passing thence to an examination of the provisions of the document in detail, the Circular proceeded as follows:

The most important consequences to which the treaty practically leads are those which result from its action as a whole upon the nations of South-eastern Europe. By the

articles erecting the new Bulgaria, a strong Slav state will be created under the auspices and control of Russia, possessing important harbours upon the shores of the Black Sea and the Archipelago, and conferring upon that Power a preponderating influence over both political and commercial relations in those seas It will be so constituted as to merge in the dominant Slav majority a considerable mass of population which is Greek in race and sympathy, and which views with alarm the prospect of absorption in a community alien to it not only in nationality but in political tendency and in religious allegiance The provisions by which this new state is to be subjected to a ruler whom Russia will practically choose, its administration framed by a Russian commissary, and the first working of its institutions commenced under the control of a Russian army, sufficiently indicate the political system of which it is to form a part

Then, after pointing out that the stipulation, in itself highly commendable, for the concession of improved institutions for the populations of Thessaly and Epirus under the supervision of the Russian Government was one which could not be viewed with satisfaction either by the Government of Greece, or by the Powers, that the territorial severance from Constantinople of the Greek, Albanian, and Slavonic provinces which were still to be left under the government of the Porte, would be 'a source of administrative embarrassment and political weakness to the Porte itself, and would expose the inhabitants to a serious risk of anarchy,' Lord Salisbury went on to show that by the other portions of the treaty analogous results are arrived at upon other frontiers of the Ottoman empire Thus—

The compulsory alienation of Bessarabia from Roumania, the extension of Bulgaria to the shores of the Black Sea, which are principally inhabited by Mussulmans and Greeks, and the acquisition of the important harbour of Batoum, will make the rule of the Russian Government dominant over all the vicinity

of the Black Sea. The acquisition of the strongholds of Armenia will place the population of that province under the immediate influence of the Power which holds them; while the extensive trade which now passes from Trebizond to Persia will, in consequence of the cessions in Kurdistan be liable to be arrested at the pleasure of the Russian Government by the prohibitory barriers of their commercial system.

Nor, the Foreign Secretary went on to insist, was it only the separate and individual effect of these various stipulations that the Powers had to consider. Objections urged against them individually might be met by arguments advanced to show that they were individually not inconsistent with the attainment of those conditions which it was the object of all the present negotiations to establish in the provinces of European and Asiatic Turkey. But it was their combined effect which should be looked at—the results arising not so much from the language of any single article in the treaty as from the operation of the instrument as a whole; and this 'combined effect' of the provisions of the treaty was to 'depress almost to the point of entire subjection the political independence of the Government of Constantinople.' Hence a discussion limited to articles selected by one Power in the Congress would be an illusory remedy for the dangers which would result from the state of things which the treaty proposed to establish.

And with the clear and firm declaration of policy which follows the circular closed:

In requiring a full consideration of the general interests which the new arrangements threaten to affect, her Majesty's Government believe that they are taking the surest means of securing these objects. They would willingly have entered a Congress in which the stipulations in question could have been examined as a whole in their relation to existing treaties, to

the acknowledged right of Great Britain and of other Powers, and to the beneficent ends which the united action of Europe has always been directed to secure But neither the interests which her Majesty's Government are specially bound to guard, nor the well being of the regions with which the treaty deals, would be consulted by the assembling of a Congress whose deliberations were to be restricted by such reservations as those which have been laid down by Prince Gortschakoff in his most recent communications

The effect of this powerful state paper upon public opinion was instantaneous and immense It was interpreted abroad and at home as signifying that England had at last found her policy on the Eastern Question, and that her Ministers, no longer weakened and divided by distracted counsels, did not now shrink from plainly notifying Russia as to the points at which her aggressive military policy infringed in their judgment on English and European interests And the military measures which speedily followed were everywhere recognised as the long delayed proof that the English Government were in earnest, and would protect these interests, if necessary, by force of arms

Those among us who denounced the settlement to which the Government ultimately assented, and who contrast it with that which England was represented in the Salisbury Circular as determined to insist on, forget what the situation was before that document was issued to the world The Settlement of Berlin must be compared, not with any ideal arrangement framed in the minds of patriotic Britons on an *ex post facto* theory of possibilities, but with the treaty of San Stefano Those who complain of the compromise with Russia as a bad bargain for England should remember that at the time when Lord Salisbury received the seals of the Foreign Office, Russia shewed not the slightest disposition

for compromise at all; that on the contrary there was evidently reason to believe her in earnest in her monstrous pretension to withdraw that treaty from the jurisdiction of Europe; and that probably nothing but the energetic action of England could have moved her from her determination to do so.

The Circular and the hand which penned it did a great work at this crisis, if only in bringing Russia to reason. It produced a speedy change in her attitude, and in that of her representative. Prince Gortschakoff replied in detail to its criticisms on the treaty of San Stefano, and in a circular in which he communicated his reply to the other Powers, he pointed out that 'the Marquis of Salisbury tells us what the English Government does not wish, but says nothing of what it does wish. We think it would be useful if his Lordship would be good enough to make this latter point known in order to promote an understanding of the situation.' Whether this suggestion was at once acted upon or not there is nothing to show, but, on the face of it, it was calculated to open the way for an amicable conference between the two Governments; and it is to be supposed that during the months of April and May, while Parliament, at the instigation of the Opposition leaders, was engaged in unworthy wranglings over the military measures undertaken by the Government for the protection of the national interests, the Foreign Secretary and the Russian Ambassador were endeavouring to arrange such a preliminary compromise of the respective claims of the two Powers as might render it possible for the Congress to meet.

On May 27, it was rumoured in the press, and admitted by Ministers in Parliament, that the prospects of a Congress had materially improved; and on June 3, it was offi-

cially announced in both Houses that the Congress would meet at Berlin, and that England would be represented at its deliberations by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary Three days, however, before this announcement was made, there had appeared in a London evening news paper what purported to be a summary of an agreement arrived at between Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff and after the short discussion which had taken place in the Lords on the appointments of the two British plenipoten tiaries, Lord Grey inquired whether there was 'any truth in the statement' which had appeared in the journal in ques tion 'as to the terms agreed upon between this coun try and Russia' To which Lord Salisbury returned the memorable and much criticised answer (whereof more here after), 'The statement to which the noble Earl refers, and other statements that I have seen, are wholly unauthentic, and are not deserving of the confidence of your Lordships House'

On June 8, Lord Beaconsfield left for Berlin, and was followed shortly afterwards by his colleague On the 13th the Congress met for the despatch of formal business, and next day, the same evening newspaper in which had pre viously appeared the outline of the rumoured Anglo Russian Agreement, published what purported to be its full text On June 17, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, in his capacity of Leader of the House in the absence of his chief, was asked whether the memorandum in question was or was not 'substantially correct' The reply of the Duke, which he afterwards admitted that he had had time 'thoroughly to consider and to weigh,' and which, indeed, showed signs of having undergone that process, was to this effect 'My Lords in answer to the question which has just been

addressed to me by the noble Earl opposite, I have to state that the document to which he alluded was evidently furnished to the journal in which it was published by some person who had access to papers that were confidential. So far as her Majesty's Government are concerned, the publication of that document was totally unauthorised, and therefore surreptitious, and as an explanation of the policy of the Government it is incomplete, and consequently inaccurate.'

To a similar question put by Lord Hartington in the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote replied, with a more intelligent recollection or a more careful recital of the prescribed formula, that the document was 'not only unauthorised but surreptitious,' and repeated the assurance that 'as a statement of the policy of her Majesty's Government it was incomplete, and therefore inaccurate.'

Unauthorised and surreptitious we now know that it was, because the Government afterwards instituted a prosecution against the person who had secretly made a copy of the official document from which it was taken; 'incomplete' it may have been; but 'inaccurate' it was not. On July 13, the treaty of Berlin was signed, and a comparison of this instrument with the treaty of San Stefano on the one hand and the Salisbury Circular on the other will at once show that the main concessions reciprocally made to each other by England and Russia, the abatements of Russian demands, and the waivers of English objections closely, if not exactly, follow the lines of the 'surreptitious' preliminary agreement.

A loud outcry arose from the more extreme partisans of Turkey against the terms of this settlement, and against the concealment which had been practised by the representatives

of this country as regarded the negotiations which had led to it In the antistrophe of this chorus the Radicals joined Absolutely dissenting from the Jingo view that the Berlin treaty was a mere surrender to Russia, and, indeed, objecting to it only on the ground that it reduced the concessions originally demanded by that Power for her Bulgarian protegé, the Radical professed as much indignation as the Jingo at that preliminary Anglo Russian arrangement by which alone the ultimate compromise could have been arrived at, and Bulgaria have been enabled to reap any of the fruits of Russia s victories, except (possibly) after another and far more formidable European war

Both Jingo and Radical denounced, though obviously with unequal degrees of sincerity, Lord Salisbury s misleading answer to Lord Grey s question on June 3 Nor am I concerned to question the substantial accuracy of their description of it It was an answer 'by the card'—an answer calculated and intended to throw the inquirer off the scent Before, however, we attempt to measure the blame to which it may be open on that account, let us at least call upon the censors to define their grounds of condemnation Not all these gentlemen were strict moralists far from it Some of them would have been ready enough to overlook the questionable reply, if they had relished the result of those negotiations which it was designed to conceal These persons, therefore, merely denounced the Foreign Secretary for secretly pursuing a policy to which they happened to object, and they may be left out of court accordingly

Others, with more principle, but even less reason, complained apparently that an English Minister should practise *any* concealment of his foreign policy from the country In other words, they objected to his asserting the recognised

right and discharging the admitted duty of every such Minister—a right and duty the assertion and discharge of which can alone make diplomacy possible, a right and duty which are asserted and discharged a dozen times a year, without the slightest protest from anyone, by the refusals of Ministers to answer Parliamentary questions on pending negotiations. Here there was, in the Minister's view, a paramount public necessity, a national and international need of concealing the fact that any negotiations had taken place at all; and it is, therefore, the means of concealment which are alone open to question. Lord Salisbury, in short, might well refuse to plead to any but those straightforward censors who, while admitting a Foreign Minister's general right to preserve the secrecy of negotiations, deny that he can be justified *under any circumstances*, in constructively denying their existence.

The question is one which lies outside the ordinary ethics of private conduct, and belongs to the casuistry of public duty. That it is one on which people may fairly agree to differ will be admitted, I think, by all save those who have wholly failed to appreciate its difficulties. It should suffice to remind these last that when A asks B for information which he has no right to obtain, and when silence, on the part of B, would amount to giving A that information to which he has no right, a situation arises in which such a reply as Lord Salisbury's finds precedent in an answer given in analogous circumstances by a man of honour so unimpeachable as Sir Walter Scott. And for my own part, I do not hesitate to avow my opinion that a statesman who, so situated, should deliberately prefer to sacrifice what he conceived to be the highest interests of State to his private scruples, would deserve that his head should be first crowned for his fidelity

to his own conscience, and then struck off for treason to country

Of the terms of the settlement so procured we can judge more fairly to day than it was possible to do at the date of its conclusion Even at that date indeed no doubt of its merits found entrance into the popular mind The two plenipotentiaries who returned home bringing Peace with Honour were enthusiastically received by their countrymen, and were rewarded with the highest honour, other than promotion in the peerage, which it is in the power of the Sovereign to bestow The disappointment with which the settlement was received by a certain section of the public we now see to have been due in part to imperfect knowledge of the conditions under which it was effected, and to an inaccurate forecast of the consequences to which it would lead It was assumed by these critics that Russia might have been forced by an adequate display of 'firmness to resign more than she did of the military and political fruits of her victories, and both the gains secured by her and the loss immediate and prospective sustained by Turkey in respect of the advantages actually retained by Russia were much overrated.

In an able despatch addressed to the Minister from whom he had formally received his instructions, as well as in more than one vigorous speech in the House of Lords and elsewhere, Lord Salisbury insisted, and, as most of us would now admit, with success, on the satisfactoriness of the settlement It was not the fact, his vindication convincingly showed, that Russia had made only slight or trivial concessions The main question in issue was whether she should be allowed to plant a new independent province subservient to her influence at the Sultan's very doors, and

on this vital point—a point of far more importance than that conceded to her in the strip of Bessarabian territory—she had been forced to give way. The 'Great Bulgaria,' extending from Salonica to Adrianople, and, with Servia and Montenegro, stretching a Slav Principality from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, had been pushed back from Salonica and Adrianople, and thrust behind the Balkans, which were left in the military occupation of the Porte.

Looked at from the negative side alone, and regarded as the rescue of Europe from a much more dangerous arrangement, this was unquestionably a great exploit to achieve without war; and if its positive advantages in erecting a barrier to the Russian advance may seem to be still somewhat overrated by Lord Salisbury, they are certainly more substantial than his opponents of that day admitted. The Berlin treaty has already nearly attained to the years of the Black Sea clauses of the treaty of 1856 when they were forcibly repudiated by Russia; yet that Power has, so far, not succeeded in modifying the Bulgarian arrangement to her advantage, but has, if anything, had to forego some of its expected benefits.

The troubles and anxieties incidental to the Eastern Question did not end for England or for the Foreign Secretary with the Settlement of Berlin. On the contrary, their direct pressure upon this country and its Government was only then beginning. Scarcely a month had elapsed after the signature of the Berlin Treaty when it became known in England that Shere Ali, the Ameer of Afghanistan, had received a Russian mission at Cabul. At any moment, and with any ruler occupying the Afghan throne, a piece of intelligence like this would have created uneasiness, but in

this instance not only a cause of anxiety but an impulse to action, were supplied alike by the circumstances of the time and by the character of the man. The Russian mission had been despatched and received during that fateful period in the spring of the year when the question of peace or war between Russia and England was trembling in the balance, and the potentate who admitted it had the year before inflexibly refused, on pleas now proved to be pretexts, to receive a mission from the Government of India.

To the probability thus indicated that the Ameer had definitively cast in his lot with our Asiatic rival—a probability notably strengthened by the fact of the ill will with which Shere Ali was known to regard the British Power—it was impossible for Ministers to remain indifferent. The Viceroy, acting under instructions from the India Office, dispatched a mission under Sir Nevile Chamberlain, and accompanied by an armed escort about a thousand strong, to the frontier, while a communication was addressed to the Ameer inviting him to admit it to his capital. Sir Nevile Chamberlain and his force reached Jumrood, on the Afghan frontier, on September 22, and Major Cavagnari was sent forward to Ali Musjid to ask for a safe conduct through the pass. The commandant of that fort, however, replied that he had no orders to let an armed mission through, and threatened to fire on the British force if they attempted to proceed.

Upon this the mission returned to Peshawur, and for nearly two months the British Government vainly strove to procure Shere Ali's compliance with their demand—in itself a sufficient answer to their political opponents' charges against them of having forced a war. Naturally and properly, however, the Indian military authorities pushed

on their warlike preparations with vigour, and at last, on November 2, an ultimatum was addressed to the Ameer, setting forth in explicit terms the consequences of a persistent refusal to admit a British mission, and giving him till November 20 to recall that refusal and signify his willingness to receive Sir Nevile Chamberlain. To this no answer was sent, and at dawn of the prescribed day the British forces advanced into Afghanistan.

To recount the history of the Afghan campaign is beyond the scope of the present volume, which is only concerned with that war in its relations with the diplomacy which preceded it during Lord Salisbury's tenure of the Indian Secretariat. The outbreak of the struggle rendered it necessary to summon Parliament for a winter session, and the two Houses met on December 5. In the meantime, the policy of the India Office had been vehemently challenged, and the late head of that department was put upon his defence in the debate on the Address. It was alleged that he had picked a quarrel with the Ameer; that he had incited the Viceroy to seek occasion against him; that he had attempted to 'force an envoy on him at Cabul'; and, most serious of all, that while engaged in the last-mentioned endeavour, he had deceived Parliament by misrepresentations of the policy which he was pursuing.

To both the personal and the political charge Lord Salisbury's answer was complete. He showed that the proximate cause of the war—the refusal to admit our mission—was merely the outward manifestation of a long smouldering hostility towards the Government of India in the mind of Shere Ali; that the original estrangement which begot this hostile feeling was of older date than the accession of Lord Beaconsfield's Government to power; and that the un-

satisfactory relations with Afghanistan which he had found in existence on assuming the direction of the India Office were a legacy from the administration of his predecessor

The personal charge was still more easily refuted It had been alleged that, in replying to a question put to him on June 11, 1877, he had stated that there had been no change of policy as regards Afghanistan, and that he had, contrary to what was the fact, denied that the British Government had attempted 'to force an envoy on the Ameer at Cabul' Lord Salisbury now showed that the former statement, which would have been false, had never been made by him, and that the latter, which had been made, was true Our relations with the Ameer of Cabul might have changed, and indeed had changed, before the summer of 1877, but the policy of the British Government towards him remained unaltered, and no attempt had been made to plant a British envoy at Cabul What had been made—and the materiality of the distinction between the two demands Lord Salisbury had no difficulty in pointing out—was a suggestion that the Ameer should admit a British representative not to Cabul, but to Herat.

If any mistake had arisen on these points, it was to be attributed to the special circumstances under which the then Secretary for India had replied to the questions addressed to him 'The circumstances of the time were difficult in the extreme Russia was in arms, great irritation prevailed, no one knew whether the war would not spread much farther than its original area,' and, in short, the whole situation as it presented itself to the Government, at the moment when the then Secretary for India was plied with these untimely inquiries as to our relations with Afghanistan, enjoined the strictest reserve

'Consequently,' continued Lord Salisbury, 'I told the noble Duke (Argyll) that I could not give him much positive but only negative information. That negative information was that we had not tried to force an envoy on the Ameer at Cabul, and that we had not suggested Sir Lewis Pelly as an envoy at Cabul. Now I want to know why the noble Earl opposite (Granville) insinuates that I said anything contrary to the most perfect truth in the reply I made to the noble Duke. The noble Earl talked of my having stated that there had been no change of policy as regards Afghanistan. I must charitably suppose that the noble Earl spoke without having taken the trouble to read the speech to which he referred. There is no such statement in that speech.'

With this challenge of his frontier policy and his response to it, Lord Salisbury's individual connection with the Afghan Question ends. Events in Afghanistan ran their predestined course—a course discreditable in some measure to our administrative dispositions, but not inglorious for our arms—throughout the year 1879. Early in 1880 Lord Beaconsfield's Government submitted the account of their six years' stewardship to the audit of their country.

The closing months of the previous year had been signalised by what is now known to history as the 'Midlothian Campaign,' a 'passionate pilgrimage' of Mr. Gladstone's from London to the North, commencing with brief tirades against his adversaries at every important railway station on the route, and concluding with a series of elaborately imperative harangues 'to the same address' at the principal local centres of his extensive constituency. It was one long denunciation of the Government and all

their works abroad in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, among the Christian populations of the East, the tribes of the North West Indian frontier, and the Boers of the Transvaal it was all this, coupled with a pledge that, if returned to power, Mr Gladstone, so far as in him lay, and the circumstances permitted, would undo all that had been done by his predecessors

By April 1, 1880, the main result of the election had declared itself, and it was found that the Ministers who, in the most formidable crisis of the last half century, had upheld the honour and interests of the country and steered it clear of a terrible European war, had been sent by their countrymen about their business Their Slavophil opponents, of course, were jubilant, and loudly acclaimed the verdict as a just and righteous condemnation of the cynical immorality of a Government which had dared to rank the interests of the country above the claims of the 'rising nationalities of Eastern Europe' The Conservatives as a party did not quite believe this, but they were a little at a loss to know what to believe in its place Many explanations of the defeat of a Government which had undoubtedly deserved well of the nation were offered, but with varying acceptance It was the Afghan War, it was the military blundering in South Africa, it was the alienation of the Church by the Public Worship Act, it was this, it was that, it was the other

Yet the true reason must have suggested itself to one of the two Ministers who brought back Peace with Honour, and may have suggested itself to his colleague Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield, the foremost opponent of the Reform Act of 1867, and the author, or part author, of that measure, might have been conscious in common as

they looked at each other, that this shocking display of national ingratitude had a disastrously simple explanation, and was but the natural and inevitable consequence of deliberately committing the destinies of the country to the hands of Ignorance and Caprice.

CHAPTER XII

Mr Gladstone's 'little bills'—Compensation for disturbance—Death of Lord Beaconsfield—Lord Salisbury chosen leader of the Conservative peers—His tactics—The Kilmainham Treaty and Arrears Bill—A chance missed—The Franchise Bill—Fall of Khartoum and escape of the Government—The Spirit Duties and fall of the Government—Lord Salisbury Prime Minister—His Cabinet—Dissolution and new Parliament—Eighty six Irish votes, three acres, and a cow—Mr Gladstone in office again—'Examination and inquiry'—The Home Rule Bill—Its defeat—Dissolution and its results.

Having purchased victory over their opponents by the unprecedented outlay in pledges and promises above recorded, and having duly received delivery of its fruits in the form of office, nothing now remained for the new Government but to pay the bill The account against them at home and abroad, in Ireland, in India, in South Africa, was a heavy one They had denounced the policy of their predecessors in three out of four quarters of the world, and had either given express assurances or raised the strongest hopes that they would make it their first business to reverse it They had derided Lord Beaconsfield's prognostications of Irish trouble, they had protested step by step against the proceedings of his Government in Afghanistan, their leader had in his most eloquent fashion denounced the annexation of the Transvaal Ireland was the first to present her little account, and the new Administration made payment by permitting a

Peace Preservation Act to lapse, and by introducing a Bill to entitle tenants who were evicted for nonpayment of rent to 'compensation for disturbance.'

The measure was opposed with much vigour in the House of Commons, and finally passed in that assembly by hardly more than half the normal Ministerial majority, reckoning Irish votes. This startling reduction in the number of supporters of a Government which had been less than three months in office, and which had already lost one of its subordinate members, Lord Lansdowne, by introducing this Bill, must have prepared most people for its fate in the House of Lords. Its rejection was moved in that House by an aged and much respected peer, Lord Grey, and it obtained no independent support of the slightest weight from anyone but Lord Derby, who, as usual, recommended a surrender, on the general principle that any measure passed by the House of Commons ought to be accepted by the Lords.

Lord Salisbury, as might have been expected, energetically opposed the Bill, and in the course of his speech delivered himself of a pungent criticism on certain characteristics of the measure which had not escaped animadversion in the Lower House; to wit, the singular ambiguity of its provisions, and the extreme uncertainty of its operation. 'Nothing,' he remarked, 'can be more puzzling than its original genesis. We do not know who suggested it, who produced it, or who approved of it. In its course through Parliament it was never possible to predict from day to day what new form it would assume. Now that we have it, it is full of expressions which the boldest man would not venture to interpret.'

He went on, not for the first time, to rebuke the pusillanimous counsels of Lord Derby by protesting, as he

had done on a previous occasion, that in giving his vote he declined 'to ask with the noble earl what would be thought of the action of the House of Lords out of doors The motto for the House of Lords should be, "Be just and fear not," and be sure that if you fear you will not long be just' The Bill was rejected by 282 votes against 51, and although it was observed at the time that an actual majority of the ordinary supporters of the Government voted with the non contents, this did not prevent the disappointed Radicals from raising an outcry against the action of the Opposition in the Upper House

It would be hard, however, to grudge them this rhetorical refuge, for the calamities which their policy was bringing upon Ireland were now plain and imminent enough to create an immediate necessity for shifting to the shoulders of other people the responsibility for having caused them The Government and their followers caught eagerly at the idea of substituting the rejection of the Disturbance Bill for the abandonment of the Peace Preservation Act as the real originant of Irish disorder If only—their theory seems to have been, though of course they did not put it quite so plainly—if only the Lords had allowed a certain number of evicted insolvent tenants to demand compensation for their eviction, the much larger number of tenants who would neither pay nor quit unless removed by force, and whom Mr Parnell and his fellow agitators had been long and loudly inciting to stay where they were and 'hold the harvest,' would have meekly evacuated their farms There would have been no moonlighting and no boycotting, no murders of landlords or agents, no mutilation of cattle or shattering of old men's legs with rusty slugs Ireland would have again sunk to rest and Fenians would have ceased from troubling—if

only the Lords had been willing to pass the Compensation for Disturbance Bill.

Meanwhile the 'village ruffian,' as Mr. Forster had not yet begun to call him, was supplying them with continual and multiplying occasion for the exercise of their ingenuity. Throughout the long session of 1880 affairs in Ireland were going from bad to worse, and the tale of agrarian outrage lengthened week by week. Parliament was prorogued on September 1, and a fortnight or so later Lord Mountmorres was shot dead within a few hundred yards of his own house in Galway. The demand for a reinforcement of Executive authority in Ireland began to make itself felt in the other parts of the United Kingdom, and in a speech at Taunton in October Lord Salisbury gave effective voice to it.

Ministers, however, were strangely slow to move, and though some reluctance to 'reverse' their policy might be expected and perhaps pardoned in men who, immediately on their accession to office had, with such complacent alacrity, reversed that of their predecessors in this very matter, their hesitation appeared to be of too pronounced a character to be attributable to this cause alone. An influential member of the Cabinet had been assiduously preaching the doctrine that 'force was no remedy'—an observation equally applicable to a strait-waistcoat, which is, however, an appliance not yet banished from the most efficient and enlightened hospitals for the treatment of the insane—and it was more than suspected that the sentimental prepossessions which inspire rhetorical commonplaces of this description were exercising too great an influence over the Government. But there were other than sentimental motives for inaction, and Lord Salisbury was the first public speaker of importance who had the acuteness to perceive

and the bluntness to point them out. Some other consideration, he said, must have enlisted the 'Birmingham members of the Cabinet' on the side of outrage and disorder

> Crime and outrage, though very disagreeable to the persons who live in the midst of them, have a Parliamentary value. A Land Bill, especially if it contained confiscatory clauses, would fall very flat if there were no disturbance in Ireland. The longer the disturbance continues the fiercer it becomes, and the more cause there will seem to be for exceptional legislation next session, and if there are members of the Government, as I suspect there are, who have some pet project, some darling theory to promote, they will wish for that state of things which will furnish the argument that will best serve to establish their theories On the other hand, if the landlords are delivered over for the winter to the tender mercies of the Land League, it may be hoped that they will be more pliable next spring, and will offer their fleeces more readily to the shearer that may desire to shear them. In other words, the present state of Ireland, all the anarchy and all the crime committed in that country, are so many arguments for future legislation. Every person who is shot, or evicted or branded, or tarred and feathered, contributes to bring revolutionary principles with regard to the land of Ireland within the range of practical politics. His example will have its effect, as the Clerkenwell outrage had, on the mind of Mr Gladstone.

To anybody who did not know for what moral enormities the English party system is responsible, the charge here conveyed might seem almost too grave for one politician to bring against another Its substantial truth, however, has been since actually admitted by Mr Chamberlain

By the end of the year 1880 it seems to have been considered by that section of the Cabinet which was most disposed to 'heroic' legislation, that they had now 'got up steam enough,' and that a touch of coercion might be

and which displayed itself with such impressive unanimity among all classes of Englishmen, was aggravated among the members of the deceased statesman's party by a sense of grave political loss Lord Beaconsfield's physical powers had it is true been for some time failing, and had he been spared it was unlikely that he would ever again have played so energetic a part as formerly in the battle of politics But his followers knew that so long as he retained the full vigour of his mental faculties—and they had as yet shown no symptoms of decay—the value of the services which he could render them would remain almost unimpaired The modern Conservative party was his creation and had been his care, he had sustained it in adversity, led it to victory, ennobled and adorned its records with his own renown, and it would in any case have been no light matter for its members to be suddenly called upon to replace the only leader whom the New Conservatism had ever known

But in this instance the difficulty of the party was most gravely enhanced by the circumstance that the departed chief had left behind him no acknowledged or visibly designated successor At the last demise of the leadership, which moreover had been simplified by the fact that the Conservatives were then in power, the case had been different. Mr Disraeli's title to lead the Tory party in the House of Commons had been admitted grudgingly enough in the earlier stages of his career, but by the time when Lord Derby's resignation opened the way for him to the highest office of the State, all murmurs of revolt against his authority had long died away He was recognised then as the only possible successor of the retiring leader At his own death there was no member of the party in that position There would have been no unanimous or virtually unani

mous answer to the question, Whom should her Majesty be expected to 'send for,' if at that moment the Government in power were compelled by the adverse vote of the House of Commons to resign office?

On the other hand it was not immediately necessary at that moment to fill Lord Beaconsfield's place at all. The first thing to do was to select a successor to him in the leadership of the House of Lords; and while it was obviously not for that House to force upon the Commons the leader so selected as the chief of the whole party, so on the other hand it was not for the Commons to attempt to dictate their selection to the House of Lords with the view of replacing Lord Beaconsfield in his wider authority by some *persona grata* to themselves. Hence the arrangement of the 'Dual Control,' which afterwards became the subject of such vivacious criticism, was in reality the creation of necessity. It would have been quite out of the question to have attempted to place the new leader of the Conservative peers, whoever he might be, over the respected head of Sir Stafford Northcote in the general councils of the party, and the question of the moment therefore became simply that of appointing to the leadership of the House of Lords.

Even for this post, however, the choice was not altogether so easy then, as after the lapse of ten years it seems now. For although, even then, there were few, if any, to dispute Lord Salisbury's pre-eminence in ability, there were still those who questioned his other qualifications for command. Old prejudices against him, dating some from the time of the Constantinople Conference, others from an earlier period, still survived. There were those who complained of his want of 'popular sympathies,' of his 'aristocratic hauteur.' Others anticipated and dreaded rashness

in his political tactics, or impatience and want of tact in his dealings with men And in the meanwhile the organs of the Ministerial press almost without exception were urging his claims to the leadership with a susp cious zeal, and giving fresh colour every day to the charge that they were striving to provide their Conservative adversaries with the best leader—for their Liberal selves.

On the whole, therefore, it is no surprising that certain outside critics of the situation were disposed to look elsewhere for a successor to the late chief, and that, Lord Salisbury's only real rival in point of eloquence and ability, Lord Cairns, being for various reasons ineligible, they should have favoured the cautious course of selecting some respected and unambitious politician of the second rank, such as the Duke of Richmond, for at any rate the temporary occupation of the vacant office The event, however, afforded a signal illustration of the disadvantages under which '*outsiders*' must always labour in the discussion of a matter of this kind It turned out on inquiry that the misgivings which Lord Salisbury's name and personality inspired in those anxious minds were not shared by those who knew him best There was a great preponderance of feeling in his favour among the members of his party, and at a meeting of Conservative peers held on May 9, at which over a hundred were present, he was, on the motion of the Duke of Richmond, seconded by Lord Cairns, unanimously chosen as Lord Beaconsfield's successor in the House of Lords. Nor will even his adversaries be prepared, one may presume, to deny that by his display not only of the brilliant gifts which he was known to possess, but of many of the solid qualities which his detractors denied him, he has abundantly justified the choice.

Assuredly it is not on the ground of rashness that any exception can be taken to his Parliamentary tactics. From 1881 onwards the disastrous career of the Government simply abounded in provocations to an Opposition leader to precipitate a crisis by means of the resolute use of his majority in the House of Lords. The Land Act of the year above mentioned was a measure so violently hostile to every principle, equitable or economical, which had hitherto governed English legislation, that its rejection on the second reading would have been thoroughly justifiable from the Conservative point of view. Lord Salisbury, however, advised the peers to accept its principle—if principle it could be called—and to be content with endeavouring to amend some of its more mischievous provisions.

Assuredly there was no sign here of the impetuosity and 'proud precipitance of soul' which it pleased his opponents to attribute to Lord Salisbury. Neither was there in the attitude of critical reserve which he maintained, and induced the Lords to maintain generally, throughout that protracted drama of blunder and bloodshed which is known to history as the second Gladstone Administration. Nevertheless the criticism, which was passed upon the leadership of the Conservatives between 1881 and 1885, by no inconsiderable section of the party, was that it was wanting in courage and initiative, and that on more than one occasion it lamentably missed its chances.

For one such miss, however, Lord Salisbury cannot be held responsible. The Dual leadership, though an unavoidable, was certainly not a wholly satisfactory arrangement, and the many admirable gifts of Sir Stafford Northcote certainly did not include those which are necessary to a 'fighting' leader of Opposition. The ruinous collapse of

the Ministerial policy in Ireland in the spring of 1882, acknowledged and accompanied as it was by the virtual expulsion of Mr Forster from office and the ignominious surrender to the imprisoned agitators in Kilmainham, and followed by the tragedy in the Phœnix Park, did undoubtedly afford one of those opportunities which if promptly and vigorously seized upon in both Houses of Parliament might quite conceivably have been used to force an appeal to the constituencies

Yet the chance was lost, not only in the House of Commons, but also, though not by Lord Salisbury's fault, in the House of Lords. Sir Stafford Northcote practically resigned to Lord Randolph Churchill and his handful of followers the control of party action in the business of the Kilmainham Treaty, while *e converso* Lord Salisbury was deserted by his party at a moment when, if they had stood by him, they might have succeeded in calling the Government at once to national account. The Arrears Bill was an integral part of the Kilmainham compact. By insisting as Lord Salisbury desired to insist, on the amendment introduced in the Lords and disagreed to by the Commons, the Bill would have been defeated, and thus on the issue raised by the Irish policy of the Government, then at its lowest point of discredit, Ministers would have been directly challenged to take the opinion of the country

Two causes, however, one creditable, the other less so, operated to produce revolt among the Conservative peers The Irish landlords in the House of Lords were tempted by the offer of money from the Exchequer in satisfaction of at least some of their long standing arrears, while other peers were doubtless influenced by considerations—to the weight of which their leader had himself done justice in his speech on

the second reading—of the gravity of affairs in Egypt. For the Government then in power may be almost said to have invented a new mode of securing political impunity. They evaded the consequences of domestic blunder by involving us in such serious difficulties abroad, that the nation was too much engrossed in the work of self-extrication to have any leisure to spare for the function of punishment. It was the summer of 1882 that witnessed the commencement of those Egyptian troubles which were destined to dog the footsteps of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues throughout their whole term of office, and during the year 1883 there was little for an Opposition to do but sit idly by and allow fate to work even more potently for them than they could possibly work for themselves.

But in the summer of 1884 the fortunes of the Government were approaching a crisis both at home and abroad; and looking back upon the situation, it seems difficult to doubt that now was the time for their opponents to have co-operated with Nemesis. The position of matters in the Soudan and the situation of General Gordon were exciting the gravest anxiety in all minds save apparently those of the Government and their infatuated partisans. Long months had elapsed during which the Opposition had vainly striven to rouse Mr. Gladstone from the apathy with which he viewed the obviously pressing needs of the devoted soldier whom he himself had placed at his post of peril. Midsummer had come and passed, and Lord Wolseley's long-delayed mission of rescue had not yet been resolved upon. Meanwhile a Franchise Bill, unaccompanied by any measure of redistribution or any information as to what such a measure would contain, was introduced into the House of Commons, and it was known that it would be submitted in

the same uncommunicative temper to the House of Lords Consistently no doubt with the attitude which since the passing of the Reform Act of 1867 the Conservatives and their leader had always maintained towards the franchise question, Lord Salisbury accepted the principle of the new Bill, but the form in which it was offered and the refusal of the Government to furnish the all important details of redistribution, supplied the Conservative peers with a perfectly legitimate *casus belli*

There was talk of their passing a resolution to adjourn the consideration of the Franchise Bill for a period of some months, as a mode of putting pressure upon the Government to produce their Redistribution Bill, and had they adopted this or some similar course, or otherwise 'played for' a defeat of the measure and a dissolution to take effect in the spring of the following year, it is far from impossible that the whole subsequent course of our history might have been changed. For in February of 1885 Khartoum fell, and it would have been with the sting of that disaster rankling in the mind of every Englishman, and its shame burning upon his cheek, that the elections would have taken place

What led to the abandonment of this plan of tactics, which was certainly for some time entertained, one knows not, but abandoned it was The Conservative majority in the Upper House appears to have lacked the courage to play the 'great game', but it is only fair to them and to their leaders to admit that the game which they did elect to play was conducted with consummate tact and skill On the motion for the second reading of the Franchise Bill, an amendment moved by Lord Cairns to the effect that the House, 'while concurring in the extension of the franchise,

could not consent to a measure which was not accompanied by provisions for so apportioning the right to return members as to ensure a true and fair representation of the people, or by any adequate security that the Franchise Bill should not come into operation except as part of an entire scheme,' was carried by a majority of fifty-nine.

This resolution did not render it imperative on the Government to withdraw the Franchise Bill, but for reasons which will readily suggest themselves, they thought fit to do so. The measure was abandoned, with an announcement that an autumn session would be held for the purpose of reintroducing it; and the interval between the summer and autumn sessions was, of course, spent in the prosecution of a noisy agitation against the House of Lords. The peers, however, unshrinkingly maintained their position, and their firmness was rewarded in the following October by the reappearance of Ministers and Ministerialists at Westminster in a far less overbearing mood. A compromise between the leaders of the two parties was speedily arranged, and the Government consented not only to introduce a Redistribution Bill, but even to modify their original redistribution proposals to meet the wishes of the Conservative leaders. The conciliatory spirit thus displayed by them deserves a commendation which would have been warmer if it had been earlier earned; but the honours of the transaction belong of right to the Conservative leader whose judgment and resolution enabled the House of Lords to maintain its constitutional authority, to uphold the principle of just and straightforward legislation, and to teach a much needed lesson to political agitators.

On February 19, 1885, about a fortnight after the news of the fall of Khartoum and the death of our betrayed hero,

Gordon, had reached this country [illegible]. In the course of the next [illegible] the Government was proposed by Lord [illegible] House of Lords, and [illegible] but another motion to the same effect [illegible] House of Commons by Sir Stafford [illegible] defeated by a [illegible] majority which had [illegible] sacrificing Gordon and [illegible] found them guilty of the [illegible] levy of a shilling duty on [illegible] and a [illegible] increase of the tax on beer [illegible] Mr Gladstone's followers deserted [illegible] about the defeat of the Government [illegible] a ground of [illegible] of the culprit and the [illegible].

The question of [illegible] the Conservative party [illegible] —a question by which [illegible] no doubt was [illegible] promptly determined by the summons of [illegible] to an audience of the Sovereign. [illegible] doubted whether he would [illegible] whether in fact he would [illegible] of forming a Government; and there [illegible] cases, plenty to be said [illegible] view both of national and of party [illegible] course well known—[illegible] ignore the fact—that a [illegible] Salisbury has a [illegible] that his principal followers [illegible] mate enough with [illegible]

ambition, which, if the public interests served by either course appear fairly balanced, he is bound to satisfy.

Lord Salisbury, after some negotiation with the Leader of the Opposition as to the attitude to be maintained towards the new Government by the majority in the House of Commons during the period which had to elapse before the dissolution, consented to accept office, and himself assumed the position of Foreign Secretary in conjunction with that of First Lord of the Treasury. The question of the leadership of the House of Commons was settled by the elevation of Sir Stafford Northcote to the peerage and the promotion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to the post which Lord Iddesleigh had so long and so honourably filled, Lord Randolph Churchill became Secretary for India, while his adherents and other nominees of his were adequately, and as some thought more than adequately, rewarded by posts in the new Government.

The five months which had still to elapse before the appeal to the constituencies were fully occupied in what may be described, with due apology for the homeliness of the metaphor, as 'cleaning up after Mr. Gladstone.' The crop of international difficulties which that illustrious statesman usually leaves behind him as an 'outgoing tenant' of Ministerial office was especially luxuriant on this occasion, and his successor's time was fully occupied during the autumn of 1885 in disposing of these undesirable 'emblements.' There was a troublesome dispute with Russia in Central Asia to be dealt with, a dispute which had gone near to involve the two countries in war, and would actually have done so if the late Government had not timely perceived the necessity of qualifying undue valour of language by excessive discretion of behaviour; and, to say

nothing of the still smouldering ashes of strife in South Africa, or of the new pre occupations which were being pre pared for us by German rivalry on the East Coast of that continent, the Egyptian imbroglio was just then in its most perplexing and threatening condition

Of the first difficulty Lord Salisbury was able to rid us altogether An amicable arrangement was arrived at with Russia with respect to the delimitation dispute on the Afghan frontier, and the foundations were laid of a better understanding between the two great partitioners of Asiatic power than they had known for years The re establish ment of our prestige in Egypt was, of course, a longer business, but a beginning had to be made, and a sensible improvement in Egyptian affairs had already begun to manifest itself when Parliament was dissolved

The issue of the General Election eloquently testified to the magnitude of the tactical loss which the Conser vative party had sustained by permitting their adversaries to carry a Franchise Bill Assentient though the former party were to the principle of that measure, they had a perfect constitutional right to insist that the old electorate should be consulted on more than one important question which arose in connection with it, and had they forced Mr Gladstone to go to the old electorate he would in all human probability have been handsomely beaten Even as it was, the remodelled English borough constituencies put him in an actual minority, nor was it until the new rural electors—the 'talesmen' so to speak, whom he had brought into the constitutional jury box specially suborned by the bribe of 'three acres and a cow,' to acquit him on his foreign policy—went to the polls, that the balance was redressed These men saved him and his followers from

utter rout. When the final returns were made up, it appeared that the two English parties were within a few votes of being equally balanced, and that the mastery of the situation—except in so far as these two parties could bring themselves to unite in order to deprive him of it—rested with Mr. Parnell and his compact and well-disciplined army of 86 Irish representatives pledged to the disruption of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.

On the agitating, the almost breathless, history of the next six months I am not called upon to dwell. The momentous drama was enacted almost wholly in the House of Commons, and except in so far as his counsels may have privately governed the Parliamentary action of his followers during the crisis, Lord Salisbury took no direct part in events. Their chronicle may be practically summed up in a calendar of some half-dozen dates. It was in November, just before the elections, that Mr. Gladstone had adjured the constituencies to return not only a Liberal majority, but one so considerable as to render the party independent of the Irish Nationalist vote—suggesting and indeed as good as avowing that if that vote were necessary to them for the recovery of office, they could scarcely be expected not to truck the interests of the United Kingdom against it; and implying *e converso* that if they were made independent of that vote they would over-ride it wherever those interests were threatened by it, even though it represented the opinion of a clear majority of the Irish people.

By the end of November it had become apparent (1) that the Nationalist vote did represent a clear majority of the Irish people, and (2) that the Liberal party were not strong enough even to recover, still less to retain, office without its assistance. Accordingly on December 17, a mysterious but

evidently inspired *communiqué* appeared in a provincial newspaper, to the effect that Mr Gladstone, impressed by the consideration of fact (1) was prepared to examine the claim of the Irish Nationalist party to Home Rule Fact (2) was not expressly referred to in this communication, and indeed has never been mentioned since by either Mr Gladstone or his followers—though there are some among their opponents who hold the opinion founded, plausibly enough, on Mr Gladstone's above quoted appeal to the constituencies, that (2) and not (1) was the parent cause of the Home Rule Bill

On January 26, five days after Parliament met, the leader of the Liberal party, together with a large majority of his followers and all the eighty six Parnellites, were suddenly stricken with a pang of 'regret' at the discovery that 'no measures' had been 'announced by her Majesty for the present relief of the agricultural classes, and especially for affording facilities to the agricultural labourers and others in the rural districts to obtain allotments and small holdings on equitable terms as to rent and security of tenure' By an early hour in the morning of the 29th, their regret became so poignant that they went into the lobby and voted in favour of an amendment moved by Mr Jesse Collings to the above effect, with the result that the Government were placed in a minority of 79

In the course of the next few days, Lord Salisbury and his colleagues resigned Mr Gladstone was sent for by the Queen, and by Saturday, February 6, he had succeeded in forming the Cabinet of the third Administration, whose various members accepted office under him on the basis of an understanding, that the Home Rule Question should be submitted to 'examination and inquiry'

In the first week in April, after just two months spent in this process, and after having 'shed' two of his colleagues, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan, in the course of it, Mr. Gladstone introduced his 'Bill to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland.' On June 7 the motion for the second reading of the measure was rejected by 341 votes against 311.

On June 26 Parliament was dissolved, and at the General Election which followed, the bulk of the English constituencies, either convinced of the rashness and impolicy of Mr. Gladstone's Bill, or bewildered by his 'lightning change' of opinions, or merely disgusted by his beginning (and ending) his legislative record with Ireland, instead of with cows and acres, turned against him, and the Unionist party came back from the polling booths with a clear majority of 118 over Gladstonians and Parnellites combined. Mr. Gladstone resigned—in this case as a matter of course, though it has now become the rule in all cases of defeat at the polls—without meeting the new Parliament, and the leader of the Conservatives received the royal command to form a Government.

CHAPTER XIII

Lord Salisbury enters upon his second Administration—Proposal to Lord Hartington—The Premier as Foreign Secretary—His record—Qualifications for the office—Personal characteristics—Eloquence and wit—Relations to his party and the country—His present position—His Ministerial career as a whole

LORD SALISBURY's entrance upon his second Administration was auspiciously preceded by an act of high public spirit and patriotism Recognising alike the signal services rendered to the nation by the Liberal Unionists in the recent crisis and the vital importance of insuring their steady co operation with the Conservative party, not only on the Irish Question, but on all important political issues, the leader of that party naturally desired to convert the informal political alliance between the two Unionist groups into a formal Administrative Coalition To that end he signified his readiness to waive, if it would facilitate matters, his own claim to the Premiership, and accept a post in a mixed Unionist Government under Lord Hartington

The magnanimous offer was, however, declined Lord Hartington held the opinion, which the event has justified, that the tie of a common fealty to the Union required no strengthening by any official bonds, and the Cabinet ultimately constructed by Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister was and remained, until, on the resignation of Lord

Randolph Churchill in the following December, it was reinforced by the accession of Mr. Goschen, of a purely Conservative complexion. Its legislative record is still incomplete, and the time therefore has not yet arrived for a final review of its performances in this kind—though it is not even now too soon to say that the judgment which awaits its legislation from the voice of all those who refuse to allow Opportunism to define Conservatism, can by no possibility be wholly favourable.

But the administrative history of the Government is already to all intents and purposes closed; its general character at any rate is not likely to be materially affected by anything which may happen before the dissolution; and considering how great a part has been played in that history by the present Prime Minister, a brief recital of it may well conclude this sketch of his public career.

Two, and in all probability two only, of the names of those Ministers who held power in England from 1886 to 1892 will be associated in future with its history: the names of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour. The administration of Ireland by the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant will live in our annals as a splendid and invigorating example of what—even in a day of declining Authority—can be accomplished for the cause of order, good government, and public honesty by a just and firm policy in the hands of a cool-headed and courageous man. And Lord Salisbury's management of our foreign affairs has in like manner and no less reassuringly shown how potent an influence, even in a world which has left her far behind as a military Power, can still be wielded by our country, with a steady and skilful hand at the helm.

The association of the Premiership, even relieved of

Treasury work, with the office of Foreign Secretary is not an arrangement wholly to be commended. The duties of the Foreign Department are in these times too exacting, not to say exhausting, to allow him who is charged with them to exercise that general supervision of Ministerial policy which is to day, perhaps, more needed than it ever was. It has often been said—and the saying, I am able to state, obtains the full assent of the present Foreign Secretary—that it will never again be possible, unless, indeed, after a revolution in our Parliamentary system, to choose that Minister from the House of Commons. He simply could not combine the discharge of his onerous Parliamentary functions with the efficient performance of his departmental duties. Even a member of the Upper House who takes these duties seriously will find them arduous enough. They occupy the whole time not allotted to his very light Parliamentary work, they cut him off in a great measure from social recreation, in the busiest season of the year they only too probably encroach upon his hours of exercise and rest.

Since the last tenure of the post by the late Lord Granville, who, for his own part, religiously observed the traditions of a more easy going age, there have been two indefatigable workers at the Foreign Office, and the testimony of Lord Rosebery and Lord Salisbury to the severity of its demands is in perfect accord. The daily spell of work which the former is said to have done in Whitehall was such as to constitute what is known to athletes as 'a record,' while his successor is understood to have found the Foreign Office the only Ministerial department which has succeeded in completely ousting the rivalry of his chemical laboratory. It is difficult, as has been

hinted, to believe that a Minister so full of work can find time to study the general political situation in its almost daily changes, or energy to direct and accommodate to it the tactics of his party. And it may be that Lord Salisbury's heroic attempt to combine two incompatible tasks has had its share in the history of more than one untoward episode in the career of the present Administration.

On the other hand, it is fair to admit that an English statesman who unites the special knowledge of a Foreign Secretary with the authority of a Premier, may well command an influence beyond the reach of either of these two Ministers in severalty; and it is certain that, whether this be or be not a contributory cause, Lord Salisbury's influence as the exponent of English policy to Foreign Powers far transcends that of any Minister of our time.

That he should have taken this branch of politics for his province will surprise no student of his career. From his earliest days in Parliament, we have seen how keen an interest he took in foreign affairs; how intelligently and, most notable point of all, with what singular independence of judgment, he studied them. It is not every politician of eight-and-twenty who would have supported the union of the Danubian Principalities against one of the strongest of prevailing superstitions; and of those who might do so at least nine in ten would have been animated by that youthful desire to affront established beliefs which subsides with maturer years. But the Eastern European policy which Lord Robert Cecil supported in 1858 is substantially identical with that for which he contended in 1878, and which he regards with equal hopefulness in 1891. From the almost exultant tone in which, in his speech at the Mansion House last year, he referred to the present and (if the luck

of events is not too unkind to her) the future of Bulgaria, it is easy to see that he regards that Principality as a no less efficient barrier against the advance of Russia in the direction of Constantinople than the Kingdom of Roumania, and holds that the one like the other is a silently eloquent justification of the policy which he has constantly advocated for more than thirty years

His reputation, however, as a Foreign Minister is fortunately independent of the particular line of action taken by him on any such keenly controversial question as this For us the time has gone by—it has passed away, indeed, for all nations under constitutional government—when any Minister of Foreign Affairs could win favour, or do anything but court confusion, by having such a thing as a 'line of action' of his own The main virtue, one might say the sole safety, for the foreign policy of a country under Parliamentary government with a democratic suffrage lies in its continuity, and the success or failure of the Foreign Minister of such a country will depend on the prudence, tact, and firmness with which he applies its accepted principles

How wide a margin for success or failure these conditions, narrow though they seem, allow—how brilliantly it is possible for a Foreign Minister of England to succeed, and how deplorably to fail, while keeping in either case strictly to them, is a matter of which some of Lord Salisbury's political opponents display an ignorance comical if genuine and cynical if assumed Mr Gladstone and his colleagues succeeded to power in 1880 with the avowed and even boasted intention of 'reversing the policy' of their predecessors How they fared in this adventure during their disastrous five years of office we all know, and they themselves still ruefully remember but what they apparently

have yet to learn is that it was not so much their acts as the spirit of them—not so much their reversals of Lord Beaconsfield's policy in the sense of undoing his specific work as the world-wide belief that they were to be bullied and cajoled by any foreign nation, or faction of a foreign nation, which cared to do so—that wrought their ruin.

Hence it is highly mirth-provoking to hear them now congratulating Lord Salisbury on his having attempted no reversals of policy on his own account, but contenting himself with, as they put it, pursuing 'just that line of conduct in foreign affairs which Mr. Gladstone himself would have pursued had he been in office.' These innocent critics evidently suppose that the mark aimed at in a foreign policy is of far more importance than the skill of the marksman, and that, this mark being by hypothesis the same whether Lord Salisbury or Mr. Gladstone despatches the projectile, it matters little which of them shoots. It is earnestly to be hoped that they will have no future opportunity of experimentalising on this precious theory.

No; the 'continuity of our foreign policy' is doubtless a principle of much value, for the reason that it is most desirable, for the prevention of dangerous misunderstandings, that all foreign Powers should know what England is driving at, or in other words what interests of her own she expects her Ministers to protect, what designs or demands on the part of other nations to resist. But to acquaint foreign Powers with this is only the beginning, only the condition precedent, of a successful foreign policy: the measure of its success depends on the extent to which these Powers recognise the expediency of reckoning with its requirements; and this again depends largely upon the amount of influence exerted by the personal qualities of the Foreign Minister.

Lord Salisbury succeeded to a handsome, even a munificent, legacy of international difficulties bequeathed to him by his predecessors in office, and a whole crop of other external questions, less serious but sufficiently vexatious, have since then accumulated upon his hands. There were differences with France and Turkey in Egypt, with Germany and Portugal in Eastern and Southern Africa, with France again in Newfoundland, with the United States in Behring's Sea, and there is not one of these differences capable of immediate or of early composition which either has not been or is not in a fair way to be composed. Our difficulty with France in Egypt was from the nature of the case impossible of immediate adjustment. Lord Salisbury's maintenance of our position in that country has been resolute without being provocative, on the Newfoundland question his attitude has been studiously conciliatory.

Germany, who had taken advantage of our Egyptian pre occupation under Mr Gladstone's management of the national affairs to steal a march upon us in Eastern Africa, has shown a marked readiness for reasonable compromise when approached by Mr Gladstone's successor, and the delimitation of the spheres of English and German territory and influence in that Continent is one of the most successful works of international negotiation on the grand scale, to which an English Minister has ever set his hand.

The territorial pretensions of Portugal, which presented difficulties of their own, have been met and disposed of with a mixture of firmness and moderation which is beyond praise, and the same statesman who has known how to make good the national claims in face of the great Powers of Europe, has also had the moral courage to warn one of the smallest against presuming upon its weakness. In

of a British colony and the menacing Chauvinism
ierican Minister.

ie tranquillity in which all these results have been
is as remarkable as their completeness. That
anxiety in which the country under Mr. Glad-
ited its daily news from abroad, and endeavoured
itself each morning to face some new danger
rests, some fresh humiliation for its pride, is a
the almost forgotten—one hopes that the next
ay not show it to have been the quite forgotten—

is no very recondite secret about those powers
ies in the present Prime Minister to which we have
blessed period of repose. The character of Lord
mind, the bent of his genius, the inspiration of
, have all alike contributed to fit him for that work
of his country which a fortunate turn of the
olitics allotted to him in 1878. What might have
uture if, at the crisis of the Eastern Question,
y could have screwed his courage to the sticking-
tion, it is impossible to say: but that one 'soft
then Foreign Secretary's composition decided the
nd his competitor passed him in the race.

wer which fortune thus put into the fittest hands
l has been nobly used. Lord Salisbury was close
years of age before he found his true political
ut with every year that he has since passed in
has more and more convincingly proved to his
that it has been found indeed. One thinks of
eign Secretary far rather than as chief director, in
er of Prime Minister, of our domestic affairs; and

that is because one instinctively feels that it is in the former capacity alone that he feels himself in his true element There has always been, or at any rate there has always seemed to be, a certain effort visible in his discharge of the duties of the party leader He has made concessions—adequate, perhaps, but certainly no more than adequate—to the modern demand upon a Prime Minister for platform oratory, but though he performs his duties in that regard with conscientious spirit and vigour while he is about them, it cannot but strike the observer that his performance is a matter of necessity and not of choice—that he mounts the 'stump' with reluctance and descends it with relief A comparison between the number of occasions on which the late and the present Prime Minister have respectively addressed popular audiences would yield decidedly disparate results

It is not fanciful to suppose that one of the attractions of the Foreign Office for him is that of all the departments of the State, it is that to which popular criticism and popular demands have obtained least access, and the Minister in charge of which is the least frequently called upon to explain and justify his proceedings before popular audiences It is possible, even in these democratic days, for a successful and trusted Foreign Secretary to feel something of that proudly inspiriting consciousness of power and that elevating sense of responsibility which nerved the will while it steadied the judgment of the great Ministers who have represented this country before the world in historic periods of the past, and one may suspect that it needs some such stimulus to Lord Salisbury's imagination, to raise his interest in contemporary politics to the requisite pitch A just conception of our Empire and of the stupendous task of directing its

destiny, may well stir in him the blood of his Elizabethan ancestors; and it is no doubt partly because he impresses other nations as a statesman hereditarily dedicated to the maintenance of our Imperial power and security that he wields the influence which is his. European Courts and Cabinets must know that to whatever external forces of restraint or deflection his foreign policy, like that of all other English Ministers, may be exposed, there is no public man in England who stands surety for English interests and English honour under heavier recognisances of blood and name. Nor can it, I think, be doubted that to the better informed and more educated body of Lord Salisbury's countrymen, this constitutes the chief source of their contentment with his rule. It is in this aspect, and probably in this alone, that he impresses their imagination: nay, it is only in this, perhaps, that he even shapes himself as a definite figure in their minds.

In no other capacity at any rate does it seem likely that Lord Salisbury will leave any enduring mark on the annals of his time. Otherwise considered, it is no doubt a sufficiently stately and imposing, but it is not an original, an interesting, or in a word, a 'characteristic' individuality. The Premier has all the gifts and attainments, all the natural and acquired advantages, which have traditionally commanded the respect and admiration of Englishmen, but, save as a Foreign Minister, none of those which win for their possessor a lasting place in the national history.

His case, indeed, is not a little remarkable as showing how varied and manifold an array of distinguished qualities may yet fail to give assurance of posthumous fame to their possessor. Lord Salisbury's brilliant intellectual faculties,

his high culture, his great powers as a debater, his masculine common sense, his trained political acumen, his wide knowledge and ripe experience of affairs, would secure him a prominent position in the public life of any European nation, and they have received ample recognition here. But singly, or in conjunction, they have not availed to win him a place among those statesmen whose figures stand out in clear relief on the tablet of the national recollection when the men themselves have departed

He is undoubtedly an orator of no mean power He has a commanding presence, a resonant voice, and a delivery which if somewhat too uniformly measured and solemn, yet for that very reason lends itself almost as effectively to the utterances of that grave and deliberate irony of which he is a master, as to those weighty expositions of policy in which he also excels Yet his eloquence is wanting in that nameless charm of the sympathetic which is exerted over the hearer by far lesser orators than he

And there is a certain lack of the same quality in his wit. Lord Beaconsfield's well remembered criticism of 'the noble lord's invective' as wanting in 'finish,' was, from one point of view, so unapt as to be almost inept 'Finish,' in the artistic sense, is exactly what it does not want That literary skill which was displayed by Lord Salisbury between 1860 and 1866 in many a trenchant contribution to the 'Quarterly,' and which is understood to have found a yet earlier field in more ephemeral productions of the press, has stood him in good stead as a debater It is not the fact, therefore, that his epigrams have ever lacked literary polish they have always had enough of that and to spare The shafts of the Parliamentary orator come barbed and fledged from the

quiver of the political pamphleteer, and they seldom fail to hit their mark. But the mark itself is not always discreetly chosen, and the arrow has sometimes seemed to go deeper into the target than the archer intended.

The 'finish' which Lord Salisbury's invective lacks is a question, not of the manner but of the matter of expression—not of the 'how to say it' but of the 'what to say.' It is not the literary taste which chastens style, but the moral sense of measure which moderates the substance of the thing said, that is at fault. Many a more bitter taunt than any that Lord Salisbury has ever uttered has given less offence than some of his; and that, because it has succeeded in hitting, where his has failed to hit, the mood of the audience to whom it was addressed. The famous 'Apology to the attorneys,' referred to in the foregoing pages, was a trifling, and, on the whole, a harmless gibe, of which absurdly too much has been made by Gladstonian critics, but in a small way it illustrates Lord Salisbury's habit of jestingly striking a note which jars on the current sentiment of his hearers.

Want of sympathy between a speaker and his audience is apt to act and react on both alike, and upon the hearers with perhaps disproportionate effect. Their temperature soon falls even lower than his: and this no doubt is one among the main reasons why the feelings entertained towards Lord Salisbury by the masses of his fellow-countrymen, though they abound in respect and admiration, are never touched by enthusiasm. A rooted and honourable aversion from the arts of the demagogue is pushed by him to the verge of the excessive. 'Popularity-hunting' is a sport so repugnant to him that he almost seems to shun the coverts where he might fall in with the game without pursuit. Even in his

intercourse with the followers by whom he is immediately surrounded, he is prevented by a certain reserve, not so much of manner as of temperament from establishing those relations of cordiality which modern party leaders usually seek, as a mere matter of policy, to create

That he fights the political battle at some disadvantage to himself and his party on this account is not of course to be denied One can well understand the impatience with which his attitude must often inspire the 'party politician,' —that is to say, the man whose vision is bounded by a 'next election,' to be won at any cost But whether the loss of the party politician may not be the gain of the country is a question upon which those who are not party politicians of this type may be permitted to entertain their own opinion To such it may possibly appear that the party politician has mistaken one of Lord Salisbury's merits for a defect They may hold that while he did well in not 'throwing up the game, in the manner of the French Irreconcilable, after the great catastrophe of 1867, he did still better in refusing to play it unreservedly on the principles of his adversaries He has made ample concession to the requirements of the new *regime*—how ample let the programme put forth by him in the famous Newport Speech delivered on the eve of the election of 1885 bear witness, and in the judgment of all such Conservatives as can look beyond 'the next election,' the process in question has been carried to its utmost legitimate lengths

If Lord Salisbury pauses and compels his party to pause here, he will have deserved wholly well of his country Its debt of gratitude to him will indeed be enhanced *by those very circumstances which are thought to detract* from his efficiency as a party leader For the struggles

and victories of party are evidently not to him what they are to most other men. His political ambitions, one may suppose, are by this time fully satisfied; his health is not of the most robust; his tastes are those rather of the student and the philosopher than of the man of action. But he has rightly felt that his authority, his experience, and his powers give the measure of his duty, and forbid him, at any rate for the present, to quit the post which he occupies. Let me not be understood to refer merely to his Ministerial office. It is far more important that he should continue to lead the Conservative party on Conservative principles, than that he and his colleagues should remain Ministers of the Crown; and it is to be hoped that no pressure from his followers, no counsels of any colleague, will prevail upon him to shape his policy as though the latter object had precedence of the former.

There are some who think that he has already yielded too much to those whose one idea of the true policy of a Conservative party in a democracy is to give larger promissory notes than the demagogue—whether with or without the design, not long since recommended to them, of subsequently repudiating their signatures. Chapter and verse can undeniably be given for the charge of having so yielded, but the error which it imputes is, after all, a solitary lapse. On the whole, and as it at present stands, Lord Salisbury's record is that of an English statesman who, while directing the affairs of his country abroad with singular skill and judgment, has also guided its domestic policy in the paths of wisdom and equity, and, though loyally submitting to the 'will of the majority' in all things lawful, has held it his first duty to maintain the just rights of every

class, however small a minority it may constitute, in the State. Such a record should surely be prized by its possessor far above the honours of any party victory, and an electoral triumph won at the cost of its integrity would indeed be dearly purchased.

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PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON